TELOS

NUMBER 111 SPRING 1998

Special Issue on:

The Crisis of Education

***Pan*: The Future of Higher Education**

***Luke*: The Future of Universities in an Era of Specialization**

***Geshekter*: The Politics of Higher Education in California**

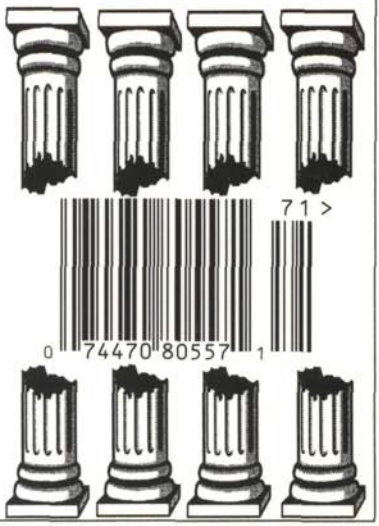
***Taves*: The New Fragmentation in Higher Education**

***Gottfried*: Private Education and Public Administration**

***Pan*: The End of the University?**

***Allen & Axiotis*: Nietzsche on the Future of Education**

***Piccone*: The End of Public Education?**



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***Eze*: Communication and Cultural Hegemony**

***Wegierski*: The Reform Party in Canada**

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***Gottfried*: Liberalism and the "Fascist" Comeback**

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*The Future of Higher Education — A Conference Report**

David Pan

The old political exigencies which justified the expansion of government budgets for higher education (the space race, the Cold War, the growth of state bureaucracies) have now given way to demands for reductions in government spending, even for weapons. Though the decline in government support for higher education has been partially made up by parents of undergraduates for the last decade, college tuition increases are approaching their limits. On the one hand, colleges and universities confront reduced budgets and cuts in faculty and programs. On the other hand, the general public, including students and parents who pay rising tuitions, feel that universities are squandering resources and overcharging for their services. A recent *Time* magazine article even suggests that tuition rates are largely arbitrary and are often set artificially high in order to impart a sense of prestige.[1]

This wide divergence of views stems from a basic disagreement about the goals of higher education and its role in American culture. While the university community is generally biased toward research in its definition of goals, the general public perceives teaching as primary. College and university administrators often view the cultural education of college students to be at least as important as the vocational or pre-professional training they might receive, but many students and most parents would

* A conference sponsored by the Telos Institute at California State University, Chico, California, October 18-20, 1996.

1. Erik Larson, "Why Colleges Cost Too Much," in *Time*, Vol. 149, No. 11 (March 17, 1997).

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prefer to forgo the cultural education in order to concentrate on vocational training. Consequently, financial troubles are merely a symptom of basic disagreements concerning the fundamental mission of higher education.

While research in the natural sciences can still be defended in terms of possible industrial applications and funded through corporate channels, humanities research is especially vulnerable to demands that professors should devote more attention to teaching. As Russell Jacoby has argued, the university has become the source of income for would-be public intellectuals, who in another era lived by publishing in magazines directed at a general audience. Whereas these magazines filtered out material which was of little interest to a wider audience, current research in the humanities is published in academic journals whose editors and sole audience consist of other academics who thrive on hyperspecialization and whose survival is guaranteed by university budgets.[2] Public resistance to subsidizing this research through tuition payments has to do with much more than mere resource allocation. It stems from a basic questioning of the cultural role of the university and the liberal tradition it supports. The primary problem with "research" in the humanities is not even that it is a waste of resources, but that researchers simply assume that they are conducting "value-free" science while they are in fact institutionalizing a *particular* notion of culture.[3] As a consequence, up to now the major debate about the type of culture being transmitted at colleges and universities has occurred more or less without the participation of either parents or the broader community. The recent "culture wars" debate has been limited to an academic context, where the fighting amounts mostly to a distributional turf war concerning the proper cultural contents of a college curriculum. The debate has been driven by the notion that determining the curriculum will also establish the cultural identity of students.

For conservatives, the most important function of the college experience as it developed in the century following the American Civil War was to integrate the educated classes into a common culture based on a liberal arts education. In their lament over the erosion of this acculturating role, scholars like Allan Bloom blame the New Left, the media and

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2. Russell Jacoby, *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), pp. ix-x.

3. For a discussion of this contradiction, see Mark R. Schwehn, *Exiles From Eden: Religion and the Academic Vocation in America* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 3-21, and David Pan, "The Crisis of the Humanities and the End of the University" in this issue of *Telos*.

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multiculturalism for a deterioration not just of higher education but of American culture itself.[4] Their perception of a general decline is based on the assumption that colleges play a central role in maintaining the unity and stability of American society. They defend the centrality of the Western cultural tradition for the curriculum either by arguing for the universal value of this tradition or by defending the importance of this tradition for building a particular American cultural identity. Bloom's fear for the "souls of today's students" is a fear that universities have "abandoned all claim to study or inform about value"[5] and that American culture will fragment into a variety of sectarian interests, resulting in the breakdown of the cultural foundations of a liberal democracy.

The multiculturalist's response to the conservative position has been to criticize the Eurocentric curriculum as a culturally chauvinistic construction without, however, questioning the university's acculturating role. They criticize Bloom's approach for privileging a particular Western European tradition, ignoring both "minority" cultures within the US and non-European cultures from around the world. While they open up the canon to a world-wide array of cultures and perspectives, the multiculturalists do not threaten the unity of the general education being transmitted in the liberal curriculum. The Telos Conference held at California State University (October 18-20, 1996) sought to address precisely these issues.

As Russell Jacoby pointed out in his comments on Lawrence Levine's *Opening of the American Mind*,[6] all discussions of higher education on both the Left and the Right have been permeated by an "unacknowledged elitism" about the nature of culture and an undue concentration on texts and symbols. Neither conservatives nor multiculturalists question the university's role as the bearer of a liberal tradition meant to totalize American culture. The only disputes concern the functions (teaching the liberal democratic principles of American citizenship or providing a multicultural perspective for world citizenship) and foundations (a set of Western European texts or a revised multicultural canon) of such a unity. They are in agreement in assuming that the university is the primary site of cultural creation and transmission, and this shared

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4. Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), pp. 313-324.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 25-32 and 313-314.

6. Lawrence W. Levine, *The Opening of the American Mind: Canons, Culture, and History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996).

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assumption has been the reason for the heated nature of the debate. But to pose the question merely in terms of a choice between multiculturalists and conservatives is a misleading liberal way of framing the issue. It limits its discussion to a variety of liberal alternatives and prefigures a continuation of the *status quo* as the only conceivable possibility.

The irrelevance of the multiculturalism debate to real issues of culture is reflected in the types of questions being posed by people outside a university context. Rather than discussing the merits of Shakespeare over Rigoberta Menchú, parents of students are questioning the entire project of acculturation through formalized schooling. The most widespread manifestation of these doubts is the demand for more emphasis on *teaching* rather than *research*, on the one hand, vocational training rather than cultural education, on the other. Arguing that research in the sciences should not be paid for with student tuitions but by the corporations which directly benefit from such research and that humanities research amounts to an unfair subsidization of a particular notion of culture based on secular, liberal principles, these parents reject the idea that the university should be the place for transmitting basic cultural values and assume that their children have no need for education which does not develop practical career skills.

From the perspective of conservatives and multiculturalists alike, the restructuring of higher education to emphasize both teaching and vocational training is interpreted as the result of a philistine mentality which threatens the cultural fabric of American society. Jacoby, for example, criticized the drop in humanities majors and the concomitant rise in business majors in the last 25 years, noting that "the invasion of the liberal arts by vocational and pre-professional studies constitutes the real illiberal education." But while Jacoby fears a deterioration of society away from liberal ideals which emphasize the humanities as the basis of culture, the cultural premises behind "illiberalization" in fact reflect a growing realization that higher education plays only a minor role in cultural transmission. Up to now, for most people the cultural question has been overshadowed by the "quality" question. Parents insist on sending their children to schools like Harvard, Yale or Stanford because they see degrees from such institutions as more valuable on the job market. But an increasing number of dissidents are beginning to question the liberal assumptions behind such a choice. Christian fundamentalists, for example, insist on the qualitative specificity of their culture and the need to defend it against attempts to integrate it into a liberal secular framework. They have begun either to take their children out of institutionalized educational contexts altogether

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in order to organize their own home schooling, reflecting their values and culture, or to found new colleges in which the curriculum is organized in terms of a fundamentalist Christian perspective incompatible with the liberal presumptions underlying both the Western culture and multicultural curricula at mainstream colleges and universities.[7]

The point here is not to defend the fundamentalist Christian perspective, but to indicate how it survives and proliferates despite liberal hostility. This has to do with the mistaken Enlightenment notion that universities can replace traditional agencies of acculturation and identity formation and pave the way for the creation of a new national consciousness. In fact, culture is reproduced not at colleges and universities but within an informal dimension, where identity is constituted before a choice is made concerning whether or not to participate in "the liberal public sphere." Clearly, this sphere is not as neutral as it claims to be. To the extent that it professes openness to all perspectives, it in fact attempts to reduce all perspectives and cultures to the formal and conceptual level of public discourse. Of course, the public sphere is necessary in order for particular cultures to interact with each other. But once this sphere develops its own infrastructure and is penetrated by the federal government, the danger arises that a national culture will develop — one based in the "public sphere" but attempting to extend its influence into the private sphere. At this point, the public sphere no longer mediates between particular cultures but seeks to advocate the Enlightenment ideology of which it is an integral part and from which it derives its legitimation as a "neutral" space. It presents itself as "universal," but is in fact a particular culture serving the interests of the federal government. Using its alleged universality and the primacy of university research as a justification, this national culture seeks to colonize and replace all particular cultures, which are constituted in the private sphere as a set of informal practices for dealing with day-to-day problems.

Seen in this way, the curtailment of research at universities might actually have a positive effect on real American culture thriving in whatever remains of functioning communities as well as in universities themselves. Such an idea must appear heretical from the standpoint of anyone working within a college or university context. After all, virtually all college professors are trained to do research rather than to teach and thus to

7. For a fundamentalist Christian discussion of the college curriculum, see *Opening the American Mind: The Integration of Biblical Truth in the Curriculum of the University*, ed. W. David Beck (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House: 1991).

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view research as their primary mission. But this anti-research perspective is not only supported by parents skeptical of the merits of university-produced culture but also by recent readings of the development of higher education in the US, which since the Civil War has been intimately connected with the expansion of both the research function and the nurturing of a national culture.

In the pre-Civil War era, higher education was funded primarily by religious denominations rather than by the federal government, and college education was neither vocational nor a means of integrating people into a national culture but a way for individual religious denominations to train clergymen and extend their influence. As a result, cultural transmission at colleges was not controlled by professional academics but by various churches, whose ultimate power and authority derived from their congregations.[8] During the late 19th century, American colleges were transformed into universities modeled on German ones by focussing on research, separating knowledge into disciplines, and developing a professional professoriat.[9] At the same time, church domination of higher education declined due to increased funding from both the federal government and industrialists, who attempted to replace the religious function of higher education with a "non-denominational" perspective and vocational goals. Yet they still retained the American idea of an undergraduate college experience after high school before professional or graduate school. As a result, even though the variety of religious perspectives on knowledge were being marginalized, the college years still provided a time for a cultural education prior to entry into professional training. Due to a lingering WASP hegemony, Protestant assumptions about knowledge dominated and stabilized higher education into the 20th century. But under the modernizing impact of industrialization and rapid capitalist expansion,[10] a new secular, humanist ethos began to be introduced in the form of a national perspective on knowledge developed by

8. See Donald G. Tewksbury, *The Founding of American Colleges and Universities before the Civil War: With Particular Reference To the Religious Influences Bearing Upon the College Movement* (New York: Teachers College Columbia University, 1932; repr. Archon Books, 1965), pp. 55-62 and 72-74.

9. See Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1965), pp. 121-145 and 317-332, and Richard Hofstadter and Walter P. Metzger, *The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), pp. 367-407.

10. An example of this approach to the college curriculum can be found in Robert M. Hutchins, *The University of Utopia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953).

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academics into a unified "Western Culture" curriculum. Both capitalist interests and the federal government formed a kind of unholy alliance to secularize education as national acculturation while, in a paradigmatic imperialist fashion, marketing it as "universal" and neutral with respect to particular cultural values. The foundation and justification for knowledge was no longer religious but nationalist — the ultimate goals being the formation not of servants of God but of proper American citizens as, paradoxically enough, cosmopolitans *par excellence* rather than as particular peoples with particular cultures.[11] At the same time, the research-bias of the university increasingly left the definition and production of culture up to university "experts" specializing in one or another area of culture. The respect accorded to these expert authorities has increasingly squeezed out any alternatives to the secular, humanist perspective, which claims to be founded on objective, scientific principles but is actually based on relatively arbitrary assumptions about the foundations of knowledge.[12] This *de facto* institutionalization of a national culture was criticized by the multiculturalists. However, this multiculturalist attack on the consolidation of culture in the US has not challenged any of the liberal assumptions about the formal nature of culture or the secular foundations of knowledge.

Speakers at the conference outlined different possibilities for replacing the liberal domination of cultural transmission in higher education with a truly "multicultural" approach which would not be based on the substitution of "world" texts for Western ones but would depend on the proliferation of different, competing perspectives on values and knowledge. One can argue that a return to a variety of denominational perspectives on knowledge would give parents clear choices about the type of cultural education their children would receive in college and at the same time allow the development of a plurality of cultures. Such an approach would not entail great changes in the present system,[13] which still counts over 750 denominational colleges amongst its approximately

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11. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

12. The finest critique of the "research" perspective is still to be found in John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University: Defined and Illustrated I. In Nine Discourses Delivered to the Catholics of Dublin II. In Occasional Lectures and Essays Addressed to the Members of the Catholic University*, ed. I. T. Ker (London: Oxford University Press - Clarendon: 1976), pp. 53-64.

13. See Merrimon Cuninggim, *Uneasy Partners: The College and the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), pp. 126-172, for a complete listing of church-related colleges and universities in the US.

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4000 institutions of higher education. Rather, a focus on *denominational* colleges would reflect the idea that cultural particularity is grounded in an informal culture based in the church rather than on a formal culture created at the university. This approach to multiculturalism eschews mere additions of non-Western or minority texts to the curriculum in order to imagine alternatives to the secular, humanist perspective on knowledge that permeates the instruction at most colleges. Taking a different approach, Michael Hill emphasized how the current "Northern" view of American history has suppressed the "Southern" view even in seemingly remote places such as Alabama and argued for a regional organization of education in which states and localities rather than the federal government would control the college curriculum. In order to balance these attempts at establishing a "multicultural" system of education, Tom Fleming argued for institutionalization of a classical humanist curriculum as the specific patrimony of a Eurocentric America. Yet it was not clear to what extent such a curriculum, if it were to be established everywhere, would not be a continuation of the nationalist, "Western Culture" curriculum, with or without multicultural appendices.

As Paul Piccone suggested, however, all these attempts at reorganizing the cultural component of higher education run the risk of attributing too much importance to higher education as a means of socialization.[14] For Piccone, values are always rooted in a private, religious dimension and cannot be developed or maintained within institutions of higher education. Because it conceives of culture only in terms of formalized learning, public schools tend either to devalue the private, informal dimension or to seek to reproduce it on a formal level. In both cases, the attempt to establish a civic culture based in schools is not only bound to fail but destroys the community culture without which a formal education has no meaning. Because values are rooted in a religious and mythic dimension which is essentially precategorical, the attempt to recreate them in a public sphere can only lead to either a disintegration of the fundamental structures of the lifeworld and the values thriving within them in favor of the formal humanistic values of the system (the liberal alternative predicated on "identity logic") or the cultivation of the federal government as a metaphysical foundation for values (the fascist alternative predicated on the forcible imposition of a particularistic modernizing ideology over a given territory).

While the liberal alternative institutionalized in the US has certainly

14. See Paul Piccone, "The End of Public Education?" in this issue of *Telos*.

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been preferable to the fascist one, it has still led to community disintegration and the bankruptcy of primary and secondary schooling. To the extent that the educational agenda in the US has been government- and business- driven, it has been entrusted more and more to secular and humanistic agencies advocating universalism and value-neutrality. The more the educational system seemed to fail, the more centralization and formalization were deployed as the remedy rather than indicted as the causes. The result has been massive government growth, the further erosion of the private sphere and, in the end, the bankruptcy of the educational system. The problem with American education is not primarily one of inadequate resources or a misguided curriculum but of community disintegration. Schools have been forced to take on social tasks which a disintegrating community seemed increasingly unable to fulfill (e.g., breakfast and lunch programs, health maintenance, etc., but also moral education and primary socialization), resulting in an overload and the failure to carry out both the new as well as the old tasks. As for multiculturalism vs. universalism, Piccone saw it as a pseudo-question. The real issue of cultural identity does not involve a choice between a multicultural particularism vs. a unified American culture. All particular cultures see themselves as grounded in universal truths, and notwithstanding its imperialist pretenses and chauvinism, "official" American culture is ultimately as particularistic as any. Rather, the real issue is one of integrating particular cultures understood as Protestant, Jewish, Catholic, Muslim, humanist, atheist, etc., constituting particular individuals — *e pluribus unum* — in a public sphere which does not obliterate any of them under culturally specific tenets parading as universals such as, e.g., human rights or abstract equality.

As a consequence of these fundamental problems, the present system of higher education in the U.S. is undergoing major changes. Charles Geshekter presented statistics concerning state funding of higher education in California, which showed that colleges and universities will be unable to avoid major budget cuts in the next decade.[15] The issue is not so much that state resources are shrinking, but that taxpayers prefer to build new prisons, presumably necessary to guarantee collective safety, rather than devote these resources to subsidizing higher education, perceived both as dispensable and generally unnecessary. Likewise, Magda Mueller showed that higher education in Germany is in an even more serious crisis

15. See Charles L. Geshekter, "The Politics of Higher Education Finance in California" in this issue of *Telos*.

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than the American system because Germany lacks the private and denominational colleges and universities which are still a major element in American education. Germany is contemplating American-style reforms, such as competitive admissions and student fees, in order to escape the problems of student apathy, professorial ineptitude, and the irrelevance of university studies to the work world. Yet the bureaucratic and obviously inadequate nature of the possible reforms only emphasizes the problems of a national system of education.

While government intervention turns education into propaganda for an allegedly neutral but in actuality nationalist agenda, efforts to move toward privatization in both Europe and the US, when resulting in public funding for private schools, end by making them into extensions of the state. As Paul Gottfried argued, vouchers for private school instruction have made participating private schools subject to federal and state controls, i.e., they end up forfeiting their autonomy and particularity. As a consequence, parochial schools that participate in a Milwaukee voucher system must "either lie or reconstruct themselves to prove that they practice religious diversity."[16]

One possible remedy for the increasing inefficiency and aloofness of public educational institutions is to allow private institutions to compete on an equal footing. As Michael Taves showed, because of the collapse of the formal educational system, there has been a proliferation of alternative educational possibilities made possible by the Internet and the realization that professionals are in constant need of additional education — an education which can often be more efficiently provided by other professionals than by a college faculty.[17] As he pointed out, graduates being hired by companies are not expected to have any particular expertise but rather the mental and social discipline necessary to be trained within a professional context. Once they have entered the work world, their additional educational needs can be fulfilled much more easily and efficiently within the private sector than in traditional colleges and universities. Not only are various courses already being offered through the Internet, replacing regular college courses, but many private firms, such as Andersen Consulting or Salomon Smith Barney, have developed extensive in-house staff and training centers to provide continuing education for their employees.

16. Paul Gottfried, "Private Education and Public Administration" in this issue of *Telos*.

17. Michael Taves, "The New Fragmentation in Higher Education," in this issue of *Telos*.

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These new ventures reflect a growing consciousness of the limits of university-based education. As Tim Luke pointed out, because colleges and universities produce and transmit knowledge that is isolated from practical applications, this "culturally concentrated knowledge" is not judged according to its usefulness but depends on an academic hierarchy based on peer review for its legitimacy.[18] As a result, such knowledge is not always of use outside the academy, where "socially distributed knowledge" dominates.[19] This type of knowledge is not divided into disciplines, such as psychology or chemistry, but is task-specific and organized around problems such as environmental protection or health monitoring. Rather than being published in journals, this knowledge consists of the information and skills inseparable from the people directly involved in solving such problems. The value of this knowledge is not determined by peer review so much as by practical success in solving the problem at hand. Though this practical expertise may depend on academic knowledge to function, it also includes an informal dimension which can neither be isolated as a set of abstract concepts nor taught in a formal university setting.

According to Luke, the growing importance of such practical knowledge is already diminishing the importance of traditional colleges and universities as sites of training for professional jobs. This function is being taken over both by networks of professionals themselves and by new universities, such as the University of Phoenix, which depend less on university-trained academics than on semi-professional teachers whose expertise derives from their experience in the workplace. Although the migration of vocational and professional training out of traditional universities will probably reduce the popularity of a traditional college education, it will also force colleges to focus on what they do best — provide a general education which teaches not only the critical thinking, quantitative analysis, and communications skills necessary for entrance into a more vocational training environment, but also the necessarily particularistic ethical perspectives needed for making decisions in any field. For Luke, the new educational imperatives may promote a redimensioning of the cultural component of higher education, which will reinstate the

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18. Tim Luke, "Miscast Canons? The Future of Universities in an Era of Flexible Specialization," in this issue of *Telos*.

19. Luke borrows the distinction between the two types of knowledge from Michael Gibbons, *et. al.*, *The New Production of Knowledge: The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage, 1994).

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cultivation of mental and moral discipline as the ultimate goal of a college education. In the process, as Valerie Allen and Ares Axiotis argue, the locus of higher education may once again be centered in the life of the students rather than of the instructors, reflecting Friedrich Nietzsche's dream of education as a cultivation of student fraternity rather than of state-sponsored pseudo-universality.[20] What Nietzsche fails to make explicit, however, is that such student communities, if they are themselves to avoid becoming appendages of a nation-state ideology, cannot be autonomous either but must be outgrowths of an overarching metaphysical framework sanctioned by a local community.

The future of higher education will increasingly be dominated by the concerns of the general public at the cost of the interests of university professors and administrators. This shift has already begun to occur in the public debate about financing, in which the structure of subsidies for higher education is changing in order to give more power to students and parents. The current proposals to provide more college loans and subsidies to middle income taxpayers, on the one hand, and to tax tuition exemptions for university personnel, on the other, will have the practical effect of shifting spending decisions to parents, who will in fact be receiving the tax credits previously paid directly to universities through the exemption on tuition benefits. These initiatives reflect a change in public opinion, which promises to end the century-old domination of both research and a unified national culture in higher education. This new phase of the culture wars may no longer pit multiculturalists against conservatives, but academics against the populace. While the former would like to paint this threat to their status as a kind of mob attack on culture, it is in fact an attempt to emancipate culture from sophistry.

20. See Valerie Allen and Ares Axiotis, "Nietzsche and the Future of Education," in this issue of *Telos*.

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Miscast Canons? The Future of Universities in an Era of Flexible Specialization

Tim Luke

To understand the condition of universities and liberal education in the era of flexible specialization, it is necessary to consider how a rising new constellation of informational productive forces affects the creation, circulation and consumption of knowledge. The dislocations spreading off-campus, coming in the wake of the collapse of the Fordist social contracts between big business, big government and big labor as a result of neo-liberal reforms by administrations from Carter to Clinton, are crippling higher education with funding reductions, confusion over curricula, redefinitions of relevance, pushing and pulling over practicality. Before undertaking a populist discussion of the problems confronting higher learning, however, it may be useful to draw some preliminary distinctions between socialization, education and training.[1] Such categories are never clean, because they often overlap. First, *socialization* is informal learning by mimesis in the household, church, neighborhood or the basic communities of everyday life about those communities' purposes, rituals or values. Second, *education* is usually cast as formal schooling in academic subjects as part of the cultural reproduction of larger institutionalized state formations, intellectual traditions, professional practices or national societies. Third, *training* is skill-acquisition to perform specific economic, organizational or technical tasks

1. For more on *Telos* populism, see Paul Piccone, "From the New Left to the New Populism," *Telos* 101 (Fall 1994), pp. 173-208; Emery M. Roe, "Sustainable Development and Populism," *Telos* 103 (Spring, 1995), pp. 148-162; "Symposium on *The Past in Ruins*," *Telos* 94 (Winter 1993-94), pp. 5-102; Christopher Lasch, "Liberalism and Civic Virtue," *Telos* 88 (Summer 1991), pp. 57-68; and, Tim Luke, "Community and Ecology," *Telos* 88 (Summer 1991), pp. 69-79.

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as part and parcel of a job or a career. While many of the arguments are pitched at "the crisis of education," it is also clear that there is a much larger crisis of socialization alongside the educational crisis. Moreover, far too many authorities are calling for more and more training as the best response to the education and socialization crises. The following discussion explores some key contradictions between education and training.

Before dealing with "the liberal tradition" of university education, one should be warned about what "the culture wars" of the past fifteen years have established about the fate of "the Western canon" or "The Great Books."[2] It would be a mistake to assume that "the Western canon" has always been at the heart of what American universities have taught.[3] Allan Bloom's celebration of "the Western tradition" behind the contemporary university does not reflect actual practice. To stand for something first against the Huns, and then later the Nazis, Bolsheviks or Fascists, "the Great Books" curriculum for Western Civilization emerged only around WWI, and it went into steep decline during the 1950s post-Sputnik "let us get scientific" frenzy.[4] Just as Western Civ courses from 1914 to 1945 were aimed either at psychoanalyzing Germans or Russians for their totalitarian psychoses or justifying why America was part of a "European civilization" that needed the New World's capital, technology and soldiers, so too did multicultural area studies in the 1960s provide intellectual

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2. For some sense of "the culture wars," see Lynne V. Cheney, *Telling the Truth: Why Our Culture and Our Country Have Stopped Making Sense — What We Can Do About It* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995); and, Todd Gitlin, *The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America is Wracked by Culture Wars* (New York: Henry Holt, 1995).

3. For full disclosure of many of such misimpressions from their original source, see Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987); Charles J. Sykes, *Profscam: Professors and the Demise of Higher Education* (New York: Kampmann and Co., 1988); Peter Shaw, *The War Against the Intellect: Episodes in the Decline of Discourse* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989); Roger Kimball, *Tenured Radicals: How Politics Has Corrupted Our Higher Education* (New York: Harper and Row, 1990); Page Smith, *Killing the Spirit: Higher Education in America* (New York: Viking, 1990); Charles J. Sykes, *The Hollow Men: Politics and Corruption in Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1990); Dinesh D'Souza, *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus* (New York: Free Press, 1991); William J. Bennett, *The De-Valuing of America: The Fight for Our Culture and Our Children* (New York: Summit Books, 1992); Martin Anderson, *Impostors in the Temple: American Intellectuals are Destroying our Universities and Cheating our Students of Their Future* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992); and, Robert H. Bork, *Slouching Towards Gomorrah: Modern Liberalism and American Decline* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996).

4. See Lawrence W. Levine, *The Opening of the American Mind: Canons, Culture, and History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), pp. 54-74.

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foundation to Washington's need to understand the putative sociopathologies of poverty, criminality, underdevelopment, non-Westernness, etc., or legitimate CIA/USAID/NATO/UN intervention in the lives of East Europeans, Arabs, Africans, Asians or Latin Americans. A "Great Books" curriculum has been up and running since 1945, but its origins, purposes and operations have always been questioned. To allege that once everyone bathed in the lucent truths of the ancients, and then it all went bad when multiculti/pomo/neo-Marxist SDS longmarchers took over the ivy tower misrepresents what has been actually happening on university campuses.

Clearly, the recent "culture wars" revolve around these kinds of claims. Yet, it is clear that the liberal tradition is becoming disconnected from the informational global economy. Undoubtedly, the canonical traditions of Western learning will have a place in the future quite different than the one it has had up to now. Thus, it is essential to reconsider the changing conditions of economic production and cultural reproduction because mere training is increasingly becoming confused with real education in a context where the latter is becoming increasingly abstract, irrelevant to everyday life and tied to the particular ideological agenda of the managerial state.

Culture Wars and Fiscal Crises

The culture wars, however, cannot be dismissed as mere rhetorical exercises. On one level, the publics served by educational institutions rightly question higher education's accountability and responsiveness to their needs. Smelling a "profscam" fermenting in almost every academic discipline, some critics transform high-profile cases of clear fraud, seeming abuse or dubious utility into definitive proof that all colleges and universities must reconceptualize their basic understanding of teaching, research and service. Yet, real intellectual excellence is rarely the target of these reforms. Instead, operating efficiency, understood along the lines of industrial input-output models, becomes the new gold standard of educational performance as financial resources devoted to terteriary education continue to shrink. Taxpayers resist new rate increases, parents buck new tuition hikes, federal research grants diminish, private R&D funds increasingly go abroad or to nonacademic labs, and philanthropic sources are exhausted. Private institutions face similar constraints plus growing consumer pressure to lower tuition costs or find new borrowing sources to cover student bills.

The canonical teachings of classic liberal arts education are miscast in a world of flexible specialization. Now *kanban* ("just in time") management or *kaizen* ("continuous improvement") engineering direct individuals away

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from the classic Aristotlean ideals of educating citizens for lives of ethics and politics through leisurely learning in favor of honing their skills of subjection to the clock or of devoting their talents to a essentially mechanical training. The wisdom of UPS, or learning how "to move at the speed of business," and the teachings of Lexus, or accepting "the relentless pursuit of perfection," displace Plato and Aristotle as the privileged codes for constituting social individuality. Aristotle's plea to impart the wisdom of statesmen to citizens falls on deaf ears as job markets, parents and taxpayers demand more and more *techne* needed to function in the globalized marketplace.

Moreover, universities cannot ignore the shortcomings of K-12 education because they cause real problems for them. On the one hand, K-12 education has become an inadequate surrogate for primary socialization (personal morality, individual hygiene, group skills) once acquired within the nuclear family, neighborhood or traditional religious institutions. On the other, teachers and parents expect too little from students, believing that youngsters need time to watch TV participate in sports and pursue leisure activities on weekends, while teenagers need time to work, date and acquire various high-status consumer goods (clothes, shoes, cars, beepers, etc.). Because so many high school graduates attend college, K-12 teachers leave to universities the job of remedial make-up work on substantive knowledge that earlier generations learned by the fifth or eight grade. Students who attend universities may learn it there, although the cafeteria-style curricula of most colleges does not guarantee results even at that level. In turn, the majority of students that never go to post-secondary schools are left undereducated by schools which are increasingly carcereal institutions complete with armed security guards, metal detectors at the doors, fenced/walled school grounds and gang warfare in the halls.

At the university level, students are also caught between one dying policy regime and a new maturing one[5] as neo-liberalism has redefined

5. This is true in places such as the Commonwealth of Virginia, where the federal government pays 6% of the costs of public education. Richmond and the state's various local and county governments almost exactly split the other 94%. Higher education costs come almost exclusively from tuitions and state subsidies. See *The Roanoke Times* (October 6, 1996), pp. A1 and A5. College costs rose by 5% in 1996-1997, once again outpacing the inflation rate of 3%. Average tuition and fees tally up to $2,996 for in-state and $4,738 for out-of-state students at public schools, while private universities average $12,823. Donald Stewart, head of the College Board, argues that public concern over rising costs are misplaced, because only 9% of students attend schools where tuition exceeds $16,000 and over 40% attend institutions where tuition is in the $2,000 to $4,000 neighborhood. Moreover, "for most Americans, the fact remains that college is still accessible, especially in light of financial aid currently available." See *The Washington Post* (September 26, 1996), p. A3.

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post-secondary education to be a private rather than a public, good. A silver lining of easy credit on the clouds of high college costs is little comfort.[6] Given college costs trends, it is no surprise that student financial aid pools have filled to the $50 billion level for the first time in history. Most of these funds, in turn, are packaged as long-term debt. Nearly $29 billion in student loans also represents a record level of indebtedness. Many colleges and universities are nominally state-funded operations, but the traditional commitment to higher education as a vital public good deserving state funds has been lost amid an emergent policy consensus that regards such cultural capital essentially as a private good.[7] As Reich observes, the emergent regime of flexible specialization actually renders all of these rational calculations problematic, as fast capitalist operations hollow out national economies, pull individuals from one country into another to be trained in another to work in yet another, and reduce the rational timelines for any serious investment decision from decades to days.[8]

Flexible Specialization Goes to College

The era of flexible specialization dawns with the emergence of "a new social system beyond classic capitalism," rising out of the digitalization

6. After being adjusted for inflation, in 1995 average household income was $34,076 and the poverty level for a family of four was $15,569. See *The Washington Post* (September 17, 1996), pp. A1 and A22. In 1980, federal funds for education were roughly divided 50/50 between outright grants and individual loans. During 1995, 75% of student aid was given out as loans. See Ben Gose, "Undergraduate Tuition Rises by an Average of 5%," in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Vol. XLIII, No. 6 (October 4, 1996), p. A38. For those most in need of higher education for upward economic mobility, it would take one-eighth to one-quarter of their annual poverty level income to pay tuition and fees at institutions where the other 40% attend comparatively low-cost colleges. Meanwhile, average households would see basically a tenth of their annual income go for in-state tuition and fees, nearly a seventh for out-of-state schools, and over a third for a private university. Lodging, food, transportation, books and other essentials are not even in the cost equation. These outlays are even more daunting for average Hispanic and black households. Their 1995 average household incomes were only $22,860 and $22,393 respectively. In turn, 30.3% of all Hispanic, 29.3% of all black, and 11.2% of all non-Hispanic whites were working at the poverty level. Over 70% of all colleges and universities charge less than 6,000 a year in tuition, but even so this figure is still over 20% of the average family's yearly income or nearly 45% of the annual income of a poverty level family. See Gose, "Tuition Rises," *op. cit.*, p. A38.

7. Rising tuition and fees, declining public funding, and increasing market awareness all are concrete proof, as James Appleberry, the president of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, put it, "of a policy shift that reflects a sentiment that higher education is solely at individual benefit and need not be funded to further the country's best interests." See *The Washington Post* (September 16, 1996), p. A3.

8. See Robert Reich, *The Work of Nations*: *Preparing Ourselves for 21st Century Capitalism* (New York: Knopf, 1991), pp. 110-118.

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of production, the globalization of exchange and the deconcentration of organization by global business.[9] From the ruins of Fordist regimes of industrial production and state administration, a loosely coupled transnational alliance of local markets, regional governments, global capital and sophisticated technologies are testing the rules of flexible accumulation. New agencies from below and above the traditional power centers of national states and big business are collapsing most existing spatial barriers, time zones and work rules.

As Harvey observes, the accumulation/production/regulation regime of flexible specialization "typically exploits a wide range of seemingly contingent geographical circumstances and reconstitutes them as structured internal elements of its own encompassing logic . . . . the result has been the production of fragmentation, insecurity and ephemeral uneven development within a highly unified global space economy of capital flows."[10] In turn, the teaching of liberal tradition has little room for growth under the high-tech horizon of rationalizing performance norms embedded at the core of this economic regime. When seeking the norms for this regulatory regimen as Lyotard put it, "the State and/or company must abandon the idealist and humanist narratives of legitimation in order to justify the new goals: in the discourse of today's financial backers of research, the only credible goal is power. Scientists, technicians, and instruments are purchased not to find truth, but to augment power."[11] At this juncture, a new performance ethic centered on training displaces the norms of *Bildung* once enshrined in pre-informational modes of education. This split, which is still neither total nor complete, needs to be examined more thoroughly.

New Modes of Production and Reproduction of Knowledge

While some pressures to reform the academy were the result of the culture wars, a greater source of change can be attributed to a new postacademic network of scientific research and technological development sites

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9. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 54.

10. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), pp. 294 and 296.

11. Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 46. To a large degree, flexible specialization is a celebration of speed, variety and diversity on a postnational scale, whose informationalized productive forces require increasingly sophisticated inputs of data/information/knowledge from everywhere all of the time in order to function efficiently. See Scott Lash and John Urry, *Economies of Signs and Space* (London: Sage, 1993).

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emerging all around the world. It is not a neat set of distinctions. Gibbons and his collaborators make this point by differentiating between two knowledge regimes: Mode 1, or "culturally concentrated knowledge," and Mode 2, or "socially distributed knowledge."[12] In an era of flexible specialization, traditional knowledge seems miscast inasmuch as its concepts and categories appear unable to hit or, even worse, to be aimed at profitable markets.

Culturally concentrated knowledge is a composite of those intellectual products once produced and consumed in Cold War research universities. Developing alongside of national welfare states and vast bureaucratic corporations, culturally concentrated knowledge was produced on campus by academic researchers to be transmitted, first, to students in accredited degree programs and, second, to clients in government, industry or nonprofit organizations through sponsored research contracts. Consequently, such knowledge has often taken shape in abstract but homogenous forms typically regarded as scholastic, theoretical or academic.

Because culturally concentrated knowledge serves the interests of its on-campus disciplinary communities, the markets for it also tend to be embedded in mostly hierarchical symbolic exchange (careerist honors, departmental rankings, journal status, university prestige, etc.). Only subsequently are they mapped into practical exchange (patents awarded, royalties paid, grants obtained, profits realized, etc.).[13] Awareness of these products is gained mainly from institutionalized academic channels (prestige journals, major conferences, top publishers, faculty networks).[14] Quality control is allegedly exercised through peer review, social accountability is not accorded a high priority and professional reflexivity is invoked only intermittently in the process of various researchers forming or unraveling research networks. The time-honored purpose of culturally concentrating knowledge in this fashion is data/information/knowledge *accumulation*. Each university community and scholarly discipline represents an ark of authority and legitimacy, which has mostly survived as a repository of historically accumulated truths to be reworked in a disciplined fashion under the auspices of each new academic enlisted as part of the ark's permanent crew.

This mode of education has been the political register for projects of nationalist political homogenization and enlightened vanguardism by the

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12. See Michael Gibbons *et al.*, *The New Production of Knowledge*: *The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies* (Sage: London, 1994), pp. 1-16.

13. Tim Luke, "The Leisure of the Theory Class: Political Correctness or Professional Correctness," *Telos* 97 (Fall 1993), pp. 97-104.

14. Gibbons *et al.*, *New Production*, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3.

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professional-technical classes off campus. Culturally concentrated knowledge has been used to create national mythologies and technological hegemonies which modern nation-states need to operate. Eurocentrism nests in the liberal tradition of such cultural concentrations of knowledge. In turn, these alleged Eurocentric formations of privilege and power in various disciplines are what multiculturalists criticize.

Socially distributed knowledge, on the other hand, is an emergent amalgam of products now mostly produced and consumed outside traditional university settings and often in the context of very short-run corporate outsourcings, task-specific government contracts or entrepreneurial venture capital start-ups. Ironically, such Mode 2 knowledge depends on and requires Mode 1 knowledge centers for many of its constituent elements — trained personnel, physical facilities, research programs, professional networks or organizing paradigms. Nonetheless, more and more of these resources can be found outside academia. It is applied, heterogenous, nonhierarchical, transient, commodifiable and specific knowledge, which may not be widely disseminated or openly published.[15] Mode 2 knowledge embodies a new means of combining concepts to attain very different goals, i.e., those of consulting groups, think tanks, government bureaus, industrial labs, research centers or advocacy coalitions. Because these producers do not need to be concentrated on campuses to train students, their sites of operation can be linked informally by fax, express mail, phone, or the Internet in virtualized, *ad hoc* work teams. Rather than sustaining disciplinary traditions, socially distributed knowledge is far more flexible, time-urgent and multimodal in shape and substance. Its practitioners often need to be aware of scholarly discussions, but most of their activity is concrete and applied.

Given that socially distributed knowledge is produced and consumed in applied settings, it needs to be transdisciplinary, empirically anchored, heterogeneously sourced and organizationally mixed. Thus, specific problems of environmental protection, crime prevention, infrastructure reengineering or health monitoring require such transdisciplinary teams with various heterogeneous methods all addressing a shared problem. The next problem will be different, so it will require entirely new teams to be assembled. Particular clients demand particular products to meet pressing needs, which create a more effective market demand and supply for such knowledge producers. Awareness of outcomes is derived through the

15. Gibbons *et al.*, *New Production*, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3.

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problem's resolution or in-house memos, mass media programming, corporate sales, research reports and on-line postings that summarize how the once pressing problem tying together this or that network was addressed. Quality control is exerted through marketing success, technical effectiveness, policy satisfaction, whose real constraints serve as the markers of social accountability and professional reflexivity. Indeed, the demand for practical knowledge becomes an integral part of defining problems, organizing solutions and evaluating performance in financial, political or technical terms. Even though particular constellations of socially distributed knowledge production are transitory, the general tendencies that these arrangements represent are fairly fixed in the everyday practices of post-Fordist flexible specialization. The relevance of socially distributing knowledge along these lines, in turn, appears to be data/information/knowledge *acceleration.*

High tech jobs are the epicenter of these changes. Thus, the number of graduates at American universities in computer and information science over the past ten years has declined rather than risen despite the vast explosion in the field. 41,889 students graduated in computer science in 1986, while only 24,000 took such degrees in 1994 — mostly due to the fact that "students interested in computer work are increasingly opting for on-the-job training" (out in Mode 2 knowledge training webs) instead of being college majors in the field (at Mode 1 knowledge accumulation centers) on university campuses.[16] This is the "Bill Gates" effect, reflecting many students' sense that one can drop out of Harvard without a degree and be worth $18 billion before turning 40. Socially distributed knowledge, then, is pulling learners into applied knowledge webs to acquire training, while enrollments for education among old wave culturally concentrated knowledge institutions go flat or decline.

Because knowledge is power and it can be bought and sold, its performance today is becoming essential. However, not much performative product can be bought off of the shelves at Mode 1 venues from universities. As a result, Mode 2 sites generate more and more performative power, capturing the commodifiable training potentials of applied knowledge at

16. See Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "Where the Jobs Are. . . ," in *The Washington Post* (October 11, 1996), p. A1 and A20-21. For the university response, see *Putting Knowledge to Work*: *Virginia Tech* (Blacksburg, VA: VPI&SU, 1996) in which the university is cast not as an ossified leftover of culturally concentrated mystification, but rather as one with "a focused, practical . . . pursuit of knowledge . . . producing ideas and innovations that are the raw material of today's product-driven economies."

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many points of sale away from universities. So the liberal education, which putatively anchors Mode 1 knowledge centers, is being rapidly eclipsed by the training ethics of *kanban* and *kaizen* Mode 2 knowledge networks.

The advent of the World Wide Web reflects how thorough-going this shift toward socially distributed knowledge has become. The strategic alliances and informal ties of Mode 2 research networks organized on-line now provide a real alternative for performing instruction to university planners. The virtualization of knowledge production in Mode 2, once again, invokes "the correspondence principle" between schooling and work, leading many to ask either if a "virtual school" is not the best place for students to learn their essential skills for virtual worklives or if virtual outreach should displace professional duties on the service side of any university faculty member's job plan.[17] Culturally concentrated education at "contact institutions" in real-time and face-to-face colocation might very well be imploded by training in socially distributed knowledge networks — cyber-schools, info-institutes, virtual techs — as learners interact on-line screen-to-screen in asynchronous modes at dislocated nodes of the Internet. The costly overhead in bricks-and-mortar Mode 1 education centers as well as the troublesome personnel frictions of any permanent large organization with people in continuous face-to-face contact all could be eliminated, or, at least, substantially reduced by migrating out into the World Wide Web as more high-tech/high-touch, informationalized points of pedagogical presence, just like Mode 2 training webs.

Mode 2 training, however, also is moving flexible specialization on college campuses from the realm of the farcical to the domain of the tragic. One widely feted model for university administrations and state bureaucrats charged with planning new initiatives for higher education in the 21st century, whether they are restructuring some existing university or designing an entirely new organization, is the University of Phoenix. Here, one sees a Mode 2 knowledge system for teaching as training. Launched in 1975 by John Sperling, a one-time professor of humanities at San Diego State University, his for-profit operations evolved out of a series of adult education courses for police and teachers that the federal government funded to launch an anti-juvenile delinquency campaign.[18] Now it has 32,000 students at 45 sites in eleven states and Puerto Rico as

17. For more discussion of these issues at VPI and SU's Cyberschool project, see http://www.cyber.vt.edu/docs/papers.html.

18. See Guy Webster, "Building an Education Empire: Adult School Made Modern by Phoenix U.," in *The Arizona Republic* (August 18, 1996), pp. B1 and B4.

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well as on-line course sites accessible anywhere in the world that enrolls over 1,500 students.[19] Responding to the life-long learning market of non-traditional students and seeking to control costs, the University of Phoenix has forsaken all Mode 1 knowledge system obligations; it has a narrow practical curriculum, a nondisciplinary structure, no library resources, no research commitments, a flat, small central administration and only a part-time semi-professional faculty. Moreover, it runs on a for-profit basis. Market performance, not peer review, valorizes its products.[20]

The reserve armies of the down-sized, under-employed, and the non-degreed amongst the post-Fordist proletariat are the University of Phoenix's student body, while the overworked ranks of the still employed, but underpaid or unchallenged, salatariat provide the institution's faculty at $1,200 to $1,800 a course. With graduate degrees in their areas of teaching and with real-world jobs tied to these areas of academic expertise, the faculty are trained to teach from a standardized set of lesson plans out a proprietary software package owned by the university. Some call it "McEducation," but many others, including the AT&T School of Business that uses the accredited degree programs of the University of Phoenix to let any AT&T employee earn bachelor's and master's degrees in house, believe that this is what education should be. In fact, June Maul, the AT&T School of Business' development director, sums it up quite succinctly: "our students do not want to hear about hypothetical stuff out of a book. They want what is relevant to their real-world jobs."[21] Consequently, it is no surprise that 80% of the students enrolled with the University of Phoenix study business or management, and most of the remaining fifth are in nursing, education or counseling degree programs.

The University of Phoenix, then, expects that its instructors and enrollees "be computer literate and have access to their own computer and modem equipment." Thus, instructional spaces that usually host teaching and learning inside material buildings are dispensed with almost entirely as both students and teachers acquire, maintain and upgrade their own ports to the virtualized university's points of presence on the Internet. The university provides a shell for accessing students, training teachers, credentialling learners, and sharing knowledge through loosely coupled transitory networks online. Moreover, the University of Phoenix portrays this

19. See http://www.uophx.edu/index.html.

20. Guy Webster, "Market Makes Role Model of Renegade: Other Schools Copy Some of Sperling's Methods," *The Arizona Republic* (August 18, 1996), *op. cit.*, pp. B1 and B5.

21. Webster, "Building an Education Empire," B4.

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strategy as a virtue, not a vice. It "offers working adults the unparalleled convenience and flexibility of attending classes from your computer keyboard," because with the University of Phoenix's "easy to use software, you will be able to join your classmates and faculty member 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from virtually anywhere you happen to be — hotel room, airport, office, or the comfort of your own home."[22] With performative promises such as these, the University of Phoenix has grown into a fully accredited university with the sixth largest student body of all private universities in the US.

Playing off the truism that not all education happens in the classroom, the promise of socially distributed knowledge is that educational networks will emphasize practical training. This gambit can become a pretext for reengineering universities, understood now as old-wave industrial factories, in the form of the "shell buildings" favored by flexible specialization. University reform, then, advances toward dismantling the material apparatus of culturally concentrated knowledge: instead of doing everything across a comprehensive education curriculum at all campuses, many things will be trimmed to bolster training in "areas of excellence." Likewise, the model of mass production of standard product for fixed vast markets in Fordist "economies of scale" will be shifted toward post-Fordist "economies of scope," bringing specialized products to targeted small markets.[23] Existing disciplinary divisions will be broken down or recombined into new interdisciplinary majors or transdisciplinary skills, which will, in turn, pivot upon co-curricular and extra-curricular activities in outside work settings or community outreach activities. Rather than paying lots of instructors and advisors to guide students, the student will be expected to assume much more responsibility for their own retraining.

In this way, training initiatives will pay off handsomely at the bottom-line by enabling university administrators to turn accursed revenue shortfalls into pedagogical blessings. Reducing the mix of disciplines saves money. Cutting back on faculty, as peer learning or self-study in constant retraining serve as substitute instructional forms, saves money. Buying fewer serials and books for the library saves money. Building smaller, less numerous facilities by migrating out into virtualized infostructures to teach, advise or service students saves money. Replacing "on campus seat

22. See http://www.uophx.edu/index.html.

23. See Michael J. Piore and Charles F. Sabel, *The Second Industrial Divide* (New York: Basic Books, 1983); and Peter Evans, *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

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time" in lectures with transdisciplinary service learning or extracurricular credits for worktime saves money. Constructing digital libraries, and virtualized instructional spaces instead of physical libraries or material dormitories keeps students home and, most importantly, saves money.

Success in socially distributed knowledge networks is measured by the norms of post-Fordist flexible specialization instead of goals from Fordist era models of mass production. To achieve excellence, it will be necessary to do *much less*, not always do more. Instead of expanding degree programs, hiring more faculty, enrolling additional students, buying more books, erecting new buildings, or elaborating disciplinary frameworks, the university of the 21st century often will be seen as effective only if it can discontinue degree programs, fire more faculty, enroll fewer students, buy fewer books, shutter existing facilities, and consolidate disciplines into more compact units. Such moves, following those in pre-informationalized manufacturing and services, will succeed only by the university outsourcing its services, downsizing its offerings, flattening its hierarchies and trimming its personnel.

In other words, this is the world of Dilbert characterized by permanent reorganization, transdisciplinary upheaval and imposed partnerships to meet "the problems of the real world." Little of this transformation is truly new or uncharted. It simply underscores an abrupt displacement of culturally concentrated learning as socially distributed networks for retraining makes this new work regimen possible, productive and efficient. Being open to such transformations increasingly means training or teaching students how to code HTML websites, sell their SAS skills to public opinion survey operations, or patent senior theses as biotechnology products. With AT&T's business school development director, Mode 1 knowledge is seen as "hypothetical stuff out of a book" or nearly worthless disinformation. Beyond the broken boundaries of Mode 1 disciplines, it is obvious what lies ahead: what students, who already work or are preparing for specific jobs, see as "relevant" training for their real-world jobs is becoming the only truly worthwhile knowledge. The liberal tradition is not well-suited to reducing frictions in the machineries of performativity. Nonetheless, this is precisely the reason why it is needed more than ever, if only to confront the emptiness and alienation that such schemes of virtualization for education as training promise to bring from global work to local schools.

Of course, those more localistic networks of community will need to cultivate their own styles of socialization, both primary and secondary, as they cope with the demands of a flexibly specialized global economy. One

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One means for enhancing their methods of socialization could be found in the liberal tradition of education. Populists are misconstrued, or even defamed, as Joe and Jill Six-Pack: socially regressive, intentionally ignorant, culturally backward. On the one hand, the future of education is here, and it has Mode 2 training written all over. This practical application for knowledge will be necessary to keep people employed or standards of living stable, but it need not undercut the traditional practices of liberal learning. On the other hand, what was positive in the liberal tradition might be lost, especially if the public consigns the liberal arts to a quasi-illegitimate limboland now populated by other educational centers with little widely perceived monetary worth: karate dojos, fly fishing classes, dance schools, auto mechanics academies or elder hostels.

This outcome is not beyond the realm of possibility. State legislatures and university presidents already willingly defund, or even close, anthropology, music, linguistics, sociology, philosophy, geography and humanities departments. Yet, ironically, an era of flexible specialization actually needs the widespread infusion of liberal education much more than Fordist times witnessed inasmuch as almost everyone will now need a steadier sense of community ethics, a clearer cultural consciousness or a more informed political awareness to function in these fast capitalist times. Otherwise, downskilled labor working with smart machines in flexible specialization systems will be imagined as having greater skills, more engagement or smarter powers than they really do, in fact, acquire.

If liberal education had truly liberating, or anti-mechanical and non-servile properties as knowledge systems, then it is at this juncture that this learning must be revitalized rather than mothballed. English should not become "technical writing," anthropology need not be reduced to "cultural studies," philosophy must not collapse into "business ethics," and humanities will not evolve into "communications," as Mode 2 training applications so often demand. The critical reasoning, analytical insights, institutional sophistication and ethical teachings of the liberal tradition as such are more valuable in a world of flexible specialization inasmuch as national hierarchies that once appropriated and monopolized these texts for their own elitist purposes are breaking down. A world-system in which the global and local become more central to everyday life than the nationalized/statalized structures of Cold War welfare/warfare states and monopolistic firms needs many more liberally educated individuals to govern localized region-states as well as to resist transnationalized global firms effectively. Without the wisdom in such learning, many municipal or

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regional polities may be without useful models for their common governance. A populist commonwealth will need ideals other than *kanban* efficiency or *kaizen* performativity to judge what "the good life" is, and then to organize its constituents and their resources well enough to maintain it.

The deconcentration of corporations and rollback of governments means not only that responsibility for one's economic well-being returns to the locality but also that statesmanship, organizational acumen, and moral vision must be exercised more broadly by everyone. A populist commonwealth will need much more liberal education, not less. A localized state will require greater citizen awareness and participation, not less. A regional world-class economy will demand thorough cultural sophistication, not less. The monopolistic straitjacketing of liberal education by elites at the top of big bureaucratic hierarchies or the self-interested reading of classical canons to serve New Class interests can be imploded, but only if the positive potentials of culturally concentrated knowledge are freed to circulate among a far more diverse and ideologically disparate range of institutions than those that now exist, i.e., everyone in local communities.

New colleges, faculties, institutes and academies for culturally concentrated teachings should and undoubtedly will evolve to serve particular religious, racial, or regional understandings of what is true in (and outside of) the Western canon for those persons at this time. Maybe these knowledges will be attained from a Worldwide Web Institute, a Microsoft U or Walt Disney World College or harvested from the History Channel, Discovery Channel or Arts and Entertainment Channel. Whether or not those formations are complemented by local institutes, there will be a diversification of what once were Mode 1 centers of education, returning perhaps to a denominational model of college learning.[24] Instead of solely satisfying the peer review pressures of national professional organizations or regional accrediting boards, these institutions will then need to respond to a broader spectrum of communal, religious, ideological, or regional expectations about whose knowledge merits cultural concentration.[25]

This postmodern populist diversification of colleges and universities along neo-denominational lines could prove politically productive. All too often now, local communities guide their planning for the future with teachings drawn only from sterile discourses derived from training in disciplines

24. For more discussion of these possibilities, see David Pan, "The Crisis of the Humanities and the End of the University," in this issue of *Telos*.

25. This position is addressed by Paul Piccone, "The Making of Educational Chaos," in this issue of *Telos*.

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of management, finance or accounting. Instead of imagining how the good life might look, such localistic New Century Councils, Commissions 2000, 21st Century Business Roundtables, or Future Vision Groups all too often confound it with more economic "growth." So their approach to ethics and politics is one-dimensional: talk about getting more jobs, building attractive infrastructure, reducing crime or finding outside investment. A truly populist imagination of municipal commonwealths will need an ethical or political edge that only an astute cosmopolitan education can provide. Therefore, the hegemony of performative knowledge codes must be contested at every turn by educated people capable of recognizing, as the canon from Aristotle to Marx also suggests, that speaking exclusively of mechanical training at "useful things" is not worthy of free people who wish to define and then gain their own forms of happiness in their visions of the good life. Clearly, this is how, where, and why "a lot of hypothetical stuff from a book" in the Western canon, can, and indeed must, be made useful to people's real world non-work life. It is not impossible and the growing frictions of flexible specialization actually make it imperative.

The fast capitalist agendas of global exchange, which pit locality against locality, people against people, market against market in search of maximum performance, need to face the critique of power, work, and scale embedded in a neo-denominational or populist take of the Western tradition's teachings. A world whose economy and society is increasingly tied to Mode 2 forms of knowledge needs Mode 1 forms of learning far more than most university administrators acknowledge in their frenzy to find practical applications for their current output of graduates, grants and grades. While he is himself a capable critic of higher education's propensities for frivolous pursuits, Adam Smith's warnings cannot be ignored in an era of flexible specialization.[26] The perfection of new rational constellations within the division of labor leads simultaneously to enhanced efficiency in the workplace and increased levels of stupefication among workers. Those "whose whole life is spent in performing a few simple operations, of which the effects too are, perhaps, always the same, or very nearly the same, has no occasion to exert his understanding, or to exercise his invention in finding out expedients for removing difficulties which never occur . . . . the torpor of his mind renders him, not only incapable of relishing or bearing a part in any rational conversation, but of conceiving any generous, noble, or tender sentiment, and consequently of forming

26. See Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), pp. 283-302.

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any just judgment concerning many even ordinary duties of private life."[27] An education rooted in the Western tradition, it seems, must be counterpoised against this tendency lest, as Smith fears, the hidden hand of the marketplace leave "all the nobler parts of the human character . . . obliterated and extinguished in the great body of the people."[28] For a populist community, this cultivation of cosmopolitan learning by whatever means available is essential, because no people will be able to attain the good life when it becomes caught in the torpor induced by the mass media, post-Fordist labor, or failed Mode 2 forms of workplace training.

The failure of statist national culture, as it has been imagined by university-trained elites, ties back to the inability or undesirability of formalizing all culture under the horizon of hard-edged, strongly-centered, or exclusively-framed nation-states in a time of rising global flows in the soft-sided, decentered, multiplex exchanges of flexible specialization. The liberal tradition of welfare/warfare states now is dissolving into the populist pluralisms of regional states and diversity of globalized creole. Yet, from this mix, many communal visions from the Western tradition of learning may help populist commonwealths to rethink what the good life is for them and then teach themselves and their children well within it.

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27. *Ibid.*, pp. 302-303.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 303.

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The Politics of Higher Education Finance in California

Charles L. Geshekter

> "The economics of higher education often seem surreal . . . . These institutions simply spend all they take in. They determine their own costs. They set their own prices . . . They aren't really answerable to anyone for their performance . . . [they] use academic freedom as a shield against scrutiny and accountability. Thus constructed, higher education is a perpetual growth machine [that] requires a steady flow of new revenues."[1]

The Demise of California's "Master Plan for Higher Education"

After buying a home, a university education is the largest financial investment that most Americans ever make. Universities provide the learning environment to produce an informed electorate, support basic research and train professionals. A college education prepares a skilled workforce but, above all, the main purpose of higher education is to create and transmit knowledge, promote critical thinking and literacy, and prepare students to be enlightened, active citizens.

California taxpayers generally considered public higher education one of the best investments they could make in the future of their state. Since 1960, public expenditures have been guided by the state's *Master Plan for Higher Education,* according to which every Californian who

1. Chester Finn, Jr. and Bruno Manno, "Behind the Curtain," in *Wilson Quarterly*, Vol. XX, No. 1 (Winter 1996), p. 46.

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could benefit from a higher education should have access to it.[2] The *Master Plan* divided higher education into an elite sector (University of California), a mass sector (California State University and California Community Colleges) and a private sector whose roles and missions were defined in an integrated but loosely coordinated structure: 1) The California Community Colleges System (CCC) offers standard general education and liberal arts courses for transfer credit, vocational-technical classes, and is open to all high school graduates and adults (106 campuses with 1.3 million students for 1996-97); 2) The California State University System (CSU) is devoted to undergraduate education. Its campuses enroll the top 33% of high school graduates and provide liberal arts, sciences and teacher training classes, with research done through existing facilities. (22 campuses with 265,000 undergraduates and 61,000 graduate students for 1996-97); 3) University of California (UC) has exclusive jurisdiction over training for the professions and offers high quality undergraduate programs open to the top 12.5% of high school graduates (9 campuses with 123,000 undergraduates and 40,000 graduate students for 1996-97); 4) Seventy-two accredited independent colleges and universities receive state financial aid in the form of "Cal Grants" to insure the enrollment of needy and lower-income students among their approximately 140,000 undergraduates and 90,000 graduate students in 1996-97.

Funding for the California *Master Plan* was based on the assumption that state productivity would increase at least 2% per year. Maintaining the same growth assumptions for 30 years, the higher education segments grew accustomed to receiving regular budget increases. The state's annual growth rate was 3% in the 1960s boom years, but when it fell to .07% by the mid-1990s, the *Master Plan* was compromised by sharply reduced economic growth. The goal of access for every Californian was further threatened by the advent of constitutional mandates for other state spending programs.[3] As a result, higher education enrollment figures were unrelated to appropriate funding levels. Undergraduate tuition fees in California increased over 100% in the 1990s,[4] the largest percentage jump of

2. William Pickens, *Financing the Plan: California's Master Plan for Higher Education, 1960-1994* (San Jose: California Higher Education Policy Center, 1995).

3. The historical context is provided by Richard Walker, "California Rages Against the Dying of the Light," *New Left Review*, 209 (January-February 1995), pp. 42-74; and Stephen Carroll, Kevin McCarthy and Mitchell Wade, "California's Looming Budget Crisis," in *RAND Research Review,* Vol. XVIII, No. 2 (Fall 1994).

4. *The NEA 1996 Almanac of Higher Education* (Washington, DC.: National Education Association, 1996), Table 5.

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any state in the country. Rather than reconsider the *Master Plan* in a changing political economy, the legislature and the Governor simply calculated "how much they felt the state could afford to expend on higher education and each system was to do what it could with that allocation."[5]

The CSU system dealt with budget reductions by means of lay offs, early faculty retirements, more part-time hires, library acquisition reductions, and support staff cutbacks that varied in severity among its various campuses. CSU has historically served first generation immigrants' children and the state's middle management class. California's population is expected to exceed 42 million by 2010, a large percentage of whom will be recent immigrants. Increased tuition, space reductions, shrinking financial resources and increased applications make it likely that, long before 2010, the state may be unable to accept every Californian who could benefit from a college education. Some analysts estimate that this "access crisis" may leave 400,000 students unserved in 2005, many of whom will be the children of first generation immigrants.[6]

Beyond the perennial disputes over how best to allocate shrinking resources, major questions were raised about the overall accountability of higher education.[7] In the early 1990s, there seemed to be something terribly wrong with campuses that restricted free speech and required compulsory niceness, yet embraced a watered down curriculum full of multicultural fads at the cost of a rigorous liberal arts education.[8] One critic noted that since effective teaching meant entertaining media-saturated students who could not tolerate boredom, "some people in higher education [were] beginning to adopt the same rhetoric as their counterparts in elementary education, that good teaching *is* tantamount to entertainment."[9]

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5. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

6. Joni Finney suggests that few provisions of the *Master Plan* remained part of public policy by 1994 when there was "no planning or process in place to develop or re-establish a policy framework, set state priorities, or link public policy goals to financial policy." Finney, "Forward" to Pickens, *op. cit.*, iii.

7. A Harris poll indicated that from 1966 to 1994 the percentage of Americans with a great deal of confidence in higher education plummeted from 61% to 25%. The researchers suggested that if "the public perceives that colleges and universities ignore the needs of students and society, its confidence will erode further, and it will be less and less willing to provide them with tax funds." Candace de Russy, "Public Universities Need Rigorous Oversight by 'Activist' Trustees," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 11, 1996, B4.

8. For a trenchant criticism of the corrosive trend toward "students as customers," see Mark Edmundson, "On the Uses of a Liberal Education," in *Harper's* (September 1997), pp. 39-49.

9. Peter Sacks, *Generation X Goes to College: An Eye-Opening Account of Teaching in Postmodern America* (Chicago: Open Court, 1996), p. 147.

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Colleges and universities in California were criticized for having lost their sense of purpose, for delivering more remediation and less "higher" education, and for outright violations of the Constitutional guarantee of equal protection under the law. Growing concerns about diminished academic standards and a lack of fiscal integrity in higher education were compounded by the perception that considerations of race, gender or ethnicity permeated decision-making at all levels of academic administration.[10] Using preferences to boost minority enrollments seemed to have the unintended consequence of depressing the graduation rates of blacks and Hispanics. Students admitted because of their race or ethnicity often lacked the academic preparation necessary to succeed at the school at which they enrolled. Getting the admissions numbers up mattered more to academic officials than the fate of these students.[11] All of these issues coalesced in the 1996 budget review process.

This essay narrates my experience as a CSU faculty member who was appointed to evaluate higher education finances from within the state legislature.[12] It briefly chronicles the state's education budget process, provides some fiscal details about one topic, "affirmative action," and concludes with examples of ominous trends within the CSU system.

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10. Russell Jacoby, *Dogmatic Wisdom: How the Culture Wars Divert Education and Distract America* (New York: Doubleday, 1994); Terry Eastland, *Ending Affirmative Action* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), especially Chapter 4. "Remediation and Diversity: Affirmative Action in Higher Education"; Frederick Lynch, *The Diversity Machine* (New York: Free Press, 1997), especially Chapter 8, "From Diversity Dreams to Budget Nightmares: The California Community Colleges System"; Todd Gitlin, *The Twilight of Common Dreams* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1995); and National Association of Scholars, *The Dissolution of General Education: 1914-1993* (Princeton: NAS, 1996)

11. By Fall 1997, CSU campuses with the greatest percentages of African-American and Hispanic students were the ones with the highest rates of incoming freshmen who failed to pass entry-level math and English placement tests.

12. My twenty-eight year tenure as a faculty member and administrator at California State University, Chico corresponds with this period described above. Chico is situated in a staunch Republican district in Northern California. My public comments about the erosion of academic content, politicization of the curriculum and the lack of fiscal accountability at CSU, Chico caught the attention of Republican State Assemblyman, Bernie Richter, a former high school teacher and local businessman. Reversing a longstanding pattern of Democratic dominance in state government, California Republicans gained a slim majority of the lower house with the 1994 elections for the fust time in 25 years. Richter became the Chairman of the Education Finance Subcommittee and appointed me (a Democrat) its Chief Policy Advisor. The task of the Subcommittee was to evaluate all expenditures — 51 cents of every California tax dollar — contained in the $32 billion education budget. Although most education spending was allocated to K-12, the portion for higher education was a staggering $6.3 billion.

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An Overview

The annual legislative review of the state budget seemed to have little impact on higher education spending patterns. The Governor submits his annual Budget in January, which the bi-partisan Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) scrutinizes then recommends its revisions a month later. By March, the six Budget Subcommittees of the Assembly begin reviewing all allocations. Since their work must be completed by late May, the Budget Committee quickly decides which topics to examine and reaches bi-partisan approval for numerous line items through informal "pre-hearings." Could the legislature establish some guidelines when appropriating $32 billion for education spending in California, especially the $6.3 billion allocated to higher education? Believing that it ought to at least propose a policy framework that required greater accountability in return for stable budgetary support, the Subcommittee sought some guidelines.

Staff personnel thoroughly investigated a variety of topics, but time constraints precluded their inclusion in the budget review. The high turnover of staff (73% have been on the job for three years or less) and a general legislative unfamiliarity with the exigencies of campus life made it difficult to arouse concern over the enormous amounts of administrative excrescences that have bloated universities. This was compounded by the fact that California's term-limits law has changed 90% of the faces in the state legislature since 1990.[13] Other factors limited the Subcommittee's oversight of higher education expenditures. Since the bulk of California's education spending must go to primary and secondary schools, the Subcommittee convened a total of 17 hearings but only devoted five to higher education. When 1996 projections of state revenues proved higher than first assumed, the Subcommittee thoroughly reviewed increased allotments for such K-12 areas as class-size reduction, deferred maintenance and reading initiatives, then decided to scrutinize the heretofore unexamined issue of "desegregation" funding.[14]

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13. "In the two elections leading up to 1996, the Assembly turnover rate increased to 36 per cent, and the share of incumbents seeking re-election dropped to 67 percent." Steven Hayward, "Same As the Old Boss?" in *Reason* (December 1997), p. 19.

14. The federal government spends $300 million for a variety of desegregation programs nationally, while California alone spends $500 million. Over 90% of that goes to only five school districts (Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Jose, San Diego, and San Bemadino) whose combined student population represents less than 17% of the state. The subcommittee investigation identified fiscal abuses in these allocations; its recommendations for reforming the reimbursement process were amended to the 1996-97 budget bill. The Legislature, however, refused to reallocate any funds from this political "sacred cow."

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Beginning with the 1994-95 Budget, Governor Pete Wilson and the Legislature agreed on a four-year "State Compact" to provide budget stability for higher education and eliminate the need for mandatory student fee increases.[15] To manage the imbalance between the size of various campuses (especially in the CSU system) and available levels of resources, the compact made several important stipulations.[16] To assess academic management practices, the 1996 Subcommittee gathered data from the CSU and CCC systems regarding faculty workloads, release time decisions, hiring procedures and the duties of the Office for Student Affairs on select campuses.[17] The Subcommittee also sought to determine the extent to which extent race, gender or ethnicity played a role in faculty employment decisions and student financial aid allocations.[18]

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15. In March 1996, California voters approved a $3 billion school bond measure for deferred maintenance projects statewide, including $975 million for higher education over the next two years. In September 1997, amidst a surging economy that generated an unanticipated surplus, Wilson signed into law AB 1415 assuring higher education of resources to maintain the same share of the state budget as in the previous year, from 1998 to 2002.

16. The stipulations were the following: 1) State funding would increase 2% in 1994-95 and average 4% for the each of the next three years. 2) CSU and UC would receive new capital outlay funds of $150 million per year for appropriate facilities with priority to seismic upgrade, life safety, and educational technology. 3) To assure that economic circumstances were not a barrier to access, student fees were frozen for the first two years and 33% of any subsequent increase was reserved for financial aid. The "Cal Grant" awards, given to needy students to attend independent colleges and universities, were increased from $5,250 per recipient in 1995, to $7,150 in 1996, and $8,184 in 1997.4) Each higher education segment would increase enrollment by 1% per year over the compact period to meet expected demands from increases in high school graduates. 5) UC, CSU, and CCC each agreed to save $10 million per year through such "productivity enhancements" as reduced administrative costs, increased management efficiency, cost-effective technologies, renegotiated utility rates, and the use of volume-purchase discounts. 6) Greater priority would be given to undergraduate instruction to insure enough key class offerings to facilitate timely graduation (CSU students average 5 years of enrolled time; UC students graduate on average in 4.3 years). 7) Faculty salaries would be restored to competitive levels with an emphasis on merit-based pay increases.

17. The burgeoning size of student affairs units is another indication of the shifting mission of CSU campuses. Yet, these units are quite reluctant to divulge data about their internal budgets or be held accountable in any way. For instance, the Office of Student Services at CSU, Chico provided no performance evaluation guidelines for any of its managers. The individual job descriptions themselves rarely mentioned which services were provided or what functions were performed. The descriptions were unrelated to the actual provision of services but dwelled at great length on how employees should get along. OSS management was obsessed with hierarchical reporting procedures and placed great emphasis on the size or importance of the unit without explaining what anyone actually did.

18. See Victor Walsh and Thomas Wood, *Bakke and Beyond: A Study of Racial and Gender Preferences in California Public Higher Education* (Berkeley: California Association of Scholars, 1996).

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Education Finance and Affirmative Action Programs

The way state funds are appropriated for higher education, combined with imperfections in the legislative oversight process, result in a remarkable lack of control over college and university spending habits.[19] Worse yet, increasingly unpopular policies that affect faculty recruitment and curricular decisions are often implemented at the discretion of academic administrators. The 1996 hearings took place amidst growing concern about the legality of many affirmative action programs. Since university officials presided over an expanding list of groups that sought special treatment as "protected classes" (women, disabled, ethnic minorities), the Subcommittee decided to pay particularly close attention to their purpose and legitimacy.

In February 1996, Assemblyman Bernie Richter told CSU and CCC administrators that his Subcommittee would scrutinize expenditures for programs that involved quotas or preferential treatment by race, ethnicity or gender.[20] As a result, the Subcommittee amassed voluminous documentation showing that CSU and CCC officials openly and covertly employed gender, racial and ethnic considerations in a repertoire of programs affecting nearly every aspect of college life. State and federal courts had struck down many preferential treatment programs, making it difficult to justify racial or ethnic preferences without clear evidence of past discrimination.

When testifying before the Subcommittee about these expenditures, administrators entrusted to provide equal educational opportunities regardless of race or gender demonstrated a cavalier attitude toward citizens who were deprived of an opportunity because they were of the "wrong" race or gender. California educators emphatically denied that they allocated public funds according to a person's color, gender or ethnicity, and at the same time vigorously defended programs that used proportional representation and numerical quotas. College officials promoted race-attentive financial aid programs, separate graduation ceremonies, special tutoring by groups,

19. The Subcommittee staff had four months to review all higher education spending. Before we developed the hearings schedule, I conferred with Assemblyman Bob Campbell (D-Contra Costa) who had chaired the Education Finance Subcommittee from 1981 to 1994 when it was part of the former Ways and Means Committee. When asked how the Subcommittee could possibly scrutinize education expenditures that totaled $32 billion, Campbell replied that his staff customarily examined the budget of only one higher education segment per year, then approved the others with a cursory review.

20. In private discussions, CSU Chancellor Barry Munitz alleged that group preferences in faculty hirings, academic programs and awarding contracts had been previously "forced" on the CSU system by legislators through their annual budget review process and in specific pieces of legislation.

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preferences in hiring faculty and the differential monitoring of students and professors according to race, gender or ethnicity.[21]

The Subcommittee's investigation into the CSU's "Forgivable Loan" Program revealed how affirmative action had become a fiscal instrument that turned an individual's alleged disadvantage into an advantage whereby an entire group was assigned a privileged status. The program provided financial incentives to "promote diversity in the CSU faculty by increasing the pool of qualified Ph.D. candidates who are members of underrepresented groups."[22] It awarded up to $10,000 per year (maximum of $30,000 total) in loans but only to students whose group was under-represented in a field of study. Promoted as a program for "minorities, women and persons with disabilities," CSU awarded $18.6 million in forgivable loans to 850 students from 1987-96 to pursue Ph.D. programs.

The actual recipients included recent immigrants from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Philippines, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Japan and Bolivia. A review of the 190 black recipients showed that 57 were in the field of education, 10 in sociology, 10 in political science and 18 in psychology; these accounted for 50% of the total, all fields in which black Americans seemed adequately represented. In nine years, throughout the entire CSU system, there was only one black recipient each in such severely under-represented fields as geology, ecology, agriculture, computer science, and engineering. "Forgivable loans" were awarded solely according to group membership, not under-representation in a particular field. During the first nine years of the program, 56 white males applied for a "forgivable loan." Sixteen were accepted, of whom 12 were disabled, in a program that clearly discriminated among applicants on the basis of group membership.

Although "diversity" is an amorphous term with no legal standing, campus officials alleged that using public funds to promote "diversity"

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21. After wading through contradictory documents throughout the budget hearings and listening to evasive testimonies riddled with convenient memory lapses, the Subcommittee convened three special hearings in October 1996 to solicit sworn testimony from senior administrators regarding discriminatory preferences in California higher education. For a summary of the findings, see Bernie Richter and Charles Geshekter, "Testimony on Preferences in California Schools," in *Academic Questions,* Vol. 11, No. 1 (Winter 1997-98), pp. 38-47.

22. CSU Board of Trustees, *Access, Opportunity, and Performance* (Long Beach, March 1995), p. 110. The loan is forgiven at a rate of 20% for each year that a recipient holds a full-time CSU faculty position. By April 1996, 190 (or 22%) of the recipients had completed their Ph.D. but less than half of them (85) were actually employed in the CSU system. After nine years, only $558,000 had been paid back directly (3%) and another $654,000 had been forgiven (3.5%). Over $17 million in loans remained unpaid.

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would help to eliminate the underrepresentation which they claimed (without proof) was the result of discrimination. Throughout the budget hearings, when legislators questioned officials about fiscal policies that allowed irrelevant ethnic and gender factors to replace intellectual rigor and objective standards, administrators insisted that race and gender considerations were an "enlightened" way to overcome racism and sexism, despite the fact that such remedies were legally indefensible, socially untenable, and frequently counter-productive. Alarmed by university officials' flagrant disregard for the consequences of their policies and aware that such programs were in conflict with recent court decisions, Subcommittee members warned the CSU and CCC systems that such civil rights violations could render their institutions vulnerable to class action law suits seeking compensatory and punitive damages.[23]

The Subcommittee found cases where administrators unilaterally halted faculty hiring if they felt there was an inadequate number of "protected class" candidates in the pool of applicants. Presented with cases of real discrimination against students and faculty, administrators either dismissed the evidence as irrelevant or claimed that such exceptions merely proved the rule of non-discrimination. When educators referred to under- or over-representation, the Subcommittee reminded them that narrowly tailored race or gender preferences were only allowable if the specific unit had been found guilty of race and/or gender discrimination in the past. Not one CSU or CCC administrator could ever identify such an instance. The pre-occupation with racial and/or gender preferences in student programs, faculty hirings, and financial allocations was indefensible in light of the growing inability of the CSU and CCC to deliver a high quality education to all Californians. Nonetheless, a group entitlement mind-set gripped CSU and CCC officials who extolled diversity, trivialized reverse discrimination, and willfully violated the law.

"Academics are deluding themselves if they think that they can have autonomy without accountability," warns Alan Wolfe. "The privileged always live at the sufferance of others. Faculty status is a privilege. To suggest that no one has the right to poke into the business of such a privileged

23. Thus, Janene Marie Jacinto, a single mother of four, graduated magna cum laude from CSU, Sacramento in 1994 with a 3.89 grade point average. She was denied admission to the graduate program in social work after her refusal to identify herself as "Hispanic" cost her valuable points in a secret rating system. Jacinto later sued the university which quickly settled for $97,000 — borne by the taxpayers. See *Summary of Hearings on the Use of Race, Gender and Ethnic Considerations at Institutions of Higher Education* (Sacramento: Assembly Budget Committee, June 1997), pp. 25-28.

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group is a remarkably insensitive slap in the face. . . . Consumers have a right to be furious."[24] Indeed, the tendency of university officials to use discriminatory preferences and quotas had helped to seriously erode public confidence in their institutions. When legislators confronted CSU and CCC representatives with explicit evidence of race-attentive or gender-based preferences in their systems, administrators claimed those programs no longer existed. In stark contrast to the civil rights movement of the 1960s, administrators in the 1990s conspicuously evaluate people on the basis of race or gender, claiming that this illiberal rationale is somehow "progressive." No university official could suggest when preferential programs would end. They were accepted as a permanent feature of campus life warranting constant support. Administrative defenders of affirmative action preferences showed the Subcommittee that they too were "ever on the lookout for criteria by which they can never proclaim victory."[25]

The budget hearings from March to May 1996 demonstrated a widespread administrative malfeasance that permitted officials to disdain the minor technicality called "equality before the law" and to perpetuate a pervasive system of preferences, quotas and group entitlements under the guise of equity. University officials would not dare admit openly that their double standards treated people differently on the basis of sex or race group entitlements. At the final Subcommittee hearing on the 1996-97 budget, CSU and CCC representatives suddenly agreed to adhere to new budget guidelines designed to prevent further abuse.[26] Subcommittee

24. Alan Wolfe, "The Feudal Culture of the Postmodern University," in *Wilson Quarterly.* Vol. XX, No. 1 (Winter 1996), p. 63.

25. Alan Wolfe, "Affirmative Action, Inc.," in *The New Yorker* (November 25, 1996), p. 110.

26. The data amassed by the Subcommittee revealed numerous violations of the public's trust throughout the system. Thus, the Subcommittee decided to target specific areas for improvement. Making certain that all faculty, staff and students were equally treated without regard for their race, gender or ethnicity seemed like the appropriate place to start. For that reason, the Subcommittee approved the following requirements for the 1996-97 fiscal year: 1) General funds expended for the CSU and Community Colleges systems must support academic programs equally accessible to students of all races, national origins and ethnicity. 2) No state funded academic program should be designed for, targeted to, or intended for students of any particular race, national origin, or ethnicity. 3) Students should not be asked to identify their race, ethnicity or national origin as a requirement to participate in any program except as specifically required by federal or state law. 4) No student should be denied an opportunity to attend any class on account of race, national origin or ethnicity. 5) When hiring faculty members, there should be no consideration of the racial, ethnic, or gender characteristics of candidates in employment decisions, except to remedy the specific effects of a particular campus' own past discriminatory practices as determined by a court of law.

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members questioned how campuses could comply with these provisions when they maintained a system of group entitlements (under many aliases) and had provided boxes of documents to prove it. In the end, it was a moot point. The Joint Senate/Assembly Conference Committee on the Budget deleted the new requirements from the final bill.

The Future of Higher Education Finance

As demands grow faster than anticipated revenues, in the next decade the California education funding crisis seems unlikely to disappear. The pressure to reduce allotments for California higher education, especially the CSU system, can be estimated by recognizing that three spending categories will continue to dominate the general fund appropriations in future state budgets. First, the mandated expenditures for health and welfare will increase steadily as eligible "receiver populations" (the elderly, school-age children and others dependent on state aid) grow slightly faster than revenues. Second, the state prison system will continue to absorb an expanding share of resources.[27] Third, K-12 spending in California must expand due to key provisions in the state constitution that require minimum spending levels per pupil be at least 40% of the General Fund appropriations. If the K- 12 budget grows to 44% by 2005 as projected enrollments increase 20% over the next decade, prisons and corrections jump to 14%, and health and welfare modestly increases to 35%, together these three categories would eventually account for 93% of General Fund expenditures.

Should these trends materialize, the goals of the *Master Plan* will become unattainable. Yet no comprehensive, long-term strategy has been formulated to replace it.[28] Among the three higher education segments in California, the CSU system is far more dependent on state funds than either the University of California (which gets 75% of its operating budget from endowments and federal research grants) or the Community Colleges (which receive a percentage of property taxes collected in their district). If the CSU system's cost per student remains the same, it may be forced to

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27. In light of California's "Three Strikes Legislation" whereby three felony convictions brings a mandatory 25 years to life sentence, the prison and correctional system is projected to grow to roughly 14% of the state budget by 2005 to accommodate these laws.

28. Policy analysts, legislators and higher education leaders only offered amorphous guidelines, e.g. find new ways to maximize the state's return on higher education investments, re-evaluate current models of organization, or restrict access to California residents. See William Zumeta and John Fawcett-Long, "State Policy and Budget Developments," in *The NEA 1996 Almanac of Higher Education,* pp. 73-98, especially fn. 129.

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turn away an estimated 200,000 to 300,000 students by the year 2005.[29]

Anticipating some of these budgetary shortfalls, the CSU has aggressively introduced cost-cutting proposals that have resulted in a reduction in the quality of instruction. Among CSU officials, the emerging consensus about the future of their system is based on the premise that high-tech innovations and electronic interactive degrees are needed to produce a "student-centered learning" environment. This would reduce the size of the faculty and reconfigure its composition, yet allow the system to maximize student enrollments through on-line courses whose numbers would count for budget purposes. As administrators insist that professors become more "productive," they expect faculty to reduce their research and curtail community service activities in order to focus on classroom teaching.

As the admissions numbers increase, the quality of students declines. By 1997, on the 22 CSU campuses overall, 54% of freshmen needed remedial math and 47% required remedial English. Why should the financial responsibility for remedial courses in math and English not be shifted to community colleges or high schools, leaving CSU free to emphasize college-level work? Attempts to explore this subject in budget hearings were futile. As revenue limitations constrict higher education funds in California, managerial remedies are deepening the faculty's distrust of administrators, whom they perceive as trying to dilute the curriculum and hire growing numbers of part-time instructors more responsive to management.[30]

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29. In February 1998, however, the Legislative Analyst's Office recalculated enrollment projections and suggested that there might not be a so-called "Tidal Wave."

30. Critics blasted CSU officials for using "scare tactics as the rationale not for the purpose of making the institution more financially viable but rather for transforming it into something altogether different." See Glynn Custred and Richard Ferrier, *Background Paper for a Faculty Response to Cornerstones: A Plan for the Radical Transformation of the California State University System* (unpublished paper, August 1997). p. 7. This document is available on the Internet at www2.inow.com/~mukesh/NOGOALS2OOO.htm. Warning the faculty that traditional classroom practices cannot be sustained in the face of budget reductions, CSU Executive Vice Chancellor Molly Broad (now President of the University of North Carolina) predicted in 1997 that "five years from now you'll see a different kind of institution" in which the Socratic method of teaching would disappear. "The sage on the stage," rhymed Ms. Broad, "will become the guide on the side." See Larry Mitchell, "Change in Education Inevitable," *Chico Enterprise-Record* (March 6, 1997). Broad insisted that CSU had to transform itself into a "virtual university" characterized by a shortened degree earning period through the adoption of new but untested learning methodologies, and a greater reliance on an extensive array of computers and broadcast-driven distance-learning techniques. Although she failed to specify which instruments would be used to measure quality control in the curriculum, Broad's prognosis was that to maintain or increase CSU budgets and sustain enrollment patterns, the entire system would have to dedicate more resources to reshaping the institution as part of a "seamless web of lifelong learning."

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Barry Munitz, Chancellor of the CSU system from 1991-98, relied on aggressive rhetoric, frightening metaphors, and a constant sense of panic to pursue a strategy of rewards and punishments. A corporate CEO knowledgeable in directing such "restructuring" in the private sector advised him that pride, fear and greed were the only things that mattered to key employees (i.e. the faculty). Munitz admitted that while considerations of this kind were rarely part of academic discussions, he warned that "incentives and sanctions are central to managing change . . . when money is tight and competition is tough."[31] In 1997, CSU faculty members got a better sense of Munitz's "transformational vision" when he unveiled his "Cornerstones Project," an initiative that would essentially reshape the CSU from a university into a four-year community college and vocational-technical training institute with some academic subjects. The "Cornerstones" document blended therapeutic teaching styles with utopian social goals. It called for a revamped curriculum that would emphasize fashionable abstractions like "collaborative problem-solving," "access skills" and "acquiring tools for lifelong learning."[32]

The extension of corporate models into universities was further evident in 1998 with the proposed reliance on untested Web-based instructional tools and techno-gimmickry in the new California Educational Technology Initiative (CETI) and Integrated Technology Strategy (ITS). The Chancellor's Office hailed CETI as the guiding force "to incorporate a state-of-the-art systemwide computing and telecommunications infrastructure into instructional and administrative functions."[33] By Spring 1998, the Academic Senates at twelve CSU campuses passed resolutions opposing the CETI, which established corporate partnerships with GTE, Microsoft, Hughes and Fujitsu. The California Faculty Association denounced CETI as a contrived scheme without a clear mission statement that centralized academic management and allowed corporate intrusion into curricular decision-making enabling vocational training to take primacy over higher education.

The secretive nature of the CETI venture raised serious doubts about the honesty of CSU's managers. Others questioned their competence

31. Barry Munitz, *Managing Transformation in an Age of Social Triage* (unpublished paper, 1995). pp. 22-23.

32. Custred and Ferrier denounced the plan as an attempt to turn CSU into "a dumbeddown, fad-ridden institution, controlled by an unimpeded bureaucracy; an empty institution impervious to true 'accountability' and one that will waste vast amounts of public funds." Custred and Ferrier, *Background Paper*, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

33. "Business Team Chosen for ITS Partnership," CSU *Stateline* (September 1997).

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since the dubious arguments for radical transformation in a time of fiscal constraint led them to launch risky business enterprises and misallocate public funds for programs whose academic substance and educational value remained remarkably unsubstantiated. Investing scarce resources in joint ventures for telecommunications technology and distance learning held great potential for managerial convenience since it allowed "profit motives, rather than pedagogical ones, to drive university policies regarding curriculum and employment."[34]

Meanwhile, other measures were underway to exert social control over tenured faculty. CSU professors seeking merit pay raises must now apply for review, first by their Department peers and then by the campus President, who has the unbridled freedom to make final decisions. With no clear cut criteria for determining awards, the Performance Salary Step Increase (PSSI) assigns immense discretionary power to campus presidents. The PSSI illustrates how a corporate-style system of patronage and punishment uses incentives and sanctions to reward the obedient and punish outstanding professors with politically unpopular views or dissident positions. Although his faculty derided the PSSI as "pissies," the Provost at CSU, Chico welcomed the program as an opportunity to reward faculty members "who've been dedicated to a life of research, teaching, and service" and promised that the university would be "extremely careful in making these allocations so as not to destroy collegiality."[35] Subsequent developments suggested that financial exigencies provide convenient opportunities to punish dissenting viewpoints.[36]

As a case in point, Vaughan Stapleton, a Chico State Professor of Criminal Justice, was chosen Outstanding Teacher for 1996. But he used the occasion of his acceptance speech to criticize local administrators for their excessive secrecy, arbitrary decision-making in funding programs, and numerous violations of shared governance with faculty. When it came time to award the 1997 merit pay increases, Chico State President Manuel Esteban ironically found 65 other faculty members who were

34. James L. Wood, "In California, *A* Dangerous Deal With Technology Companies," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (February 20, 1998), B6. By March 1998, the entire scheme was further jeopardized when the corporate partners sought to negotiate an "exit strategy" to protect their $300 million investment in case the partnership proved unprofitable or collapsed entirely.

35. Larry Mitchell, "New CSU Pay Contract is Two-Sided," *Chico Enterprise-Record* (October 6, 1995).

36. Larry Mitchell, " 'Outstanding' Prof Rebels," *Chico Enterprise-Record* (March 19, 1997).

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more deserving of the award than his campus's own Outstanding Teacher! Angered by the ominous predictions of Vice Chancellor Broad and the Munitz management team's infatuation with electronic gadgetry to educate students cheaply, the outspoken Stapleton "divested" himself of the $1,000 Outstanding Teacher Prize and donated it to the Associated Students. Faculty who remain quiescent and conformist are left alone to voice ideologically safe opinions. The university has no interest in hounding obedient, compliant instructors.

Conclusion

Many critics claim that the university's intellectual crisis has been largely of its own making, brought on by its defense of one curricular absurdity after another.[37] Most professors remain silent about the considerable damage wrought by fiscal mismanagement, afraid of becoming administrative targets at a time of labor reductions. The faculty privately express fears that the increased number of televised courses and larger classes will make it exceedingly difficult to give proper attention to student learning that fosters inquiry and reflection. CSU officials who now describe the university as a "knowledge-based provider" can be expected to exhort students to apply for admission, then insist that they move more purposefully than ever through an incoherent and dumbed-down undergraduate curriculum. Yet professors remain generally reluctant to publicly

37. John M. Ellis, *Literature Lost: Social Agendas and the Corruption of the Humanities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997) examines the forces behind the startling decline in the intellectual quality of work in the humanities and Rita Kramer, *Ed School Follies: The Miseducation of America's Teachers* (New York: The Free Press, 1991) documents the demise of academic rigor and the rise of therapeutic strategies in training teachers at schools of education. The financial crunch in California may be exacerbated by imprudent fiscal schemes devised by the faculty themselves. An example of academic chicanery surfaced at CSU, Chico in August 1996 when its Academic Senate Executive Committee proposed to give college credit by converting intramural courses into activities classes, thereby artificially boosting "enrollment" figures to bring the campus an additional $560,000. The local media condemned the perfidious scheme as an example of "the basket-weaving school of higher education" that made fiscal expediency more important than academic excellence. See "Good Riddance to a Bad Idea," *Chico Enterprise-Record* (August 12, 1996). The plan was abandoned when Assemblyman Richter prepared bi-partisan legislation barring such reimbursements on any CSU campus. Chico State's Academic Senate Chairman, Sam Edelman denounced such legislative "intrusion" into faculty governance, oblivious that his institution's educational integrity had been compromised by another example of what Alan Wolfe termed the faculty's "inability to make hard decisions, take unpopular actions or police their own conduct." Wolfe, "Feudal Culture," *op. cit.*, p. 58.

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discuss these issues, seeming to validate Wolfe's conclusion that "the operating rules of the university resemble a Mafia 'honor' code. It's best not to inquire too deeply into anyone else's activities. If I ask the purpose of what you are doing, you will ask the same of me, and before long the rationale for the entire enterprise will begin to crumble."[38]

As senior faculty retire, the CSU system may steadily reduce the number of tenured professors, replacing highly skilled, discipline-based instructors (and their benefits packages) with cheaper, less qualified part-timers. Those faculty would comprise an academic underclass, a reserve of intellectual labor of *ad hoc* instructors who focus strictly on teaching, not research, work with minimal benefits, and cover a variety of classes whenever and wherever the demand warrants. Along with a greater scrutiny of faculty salaries, there may be attempts to adjust salary schedules at individual campuses to bring them in line with local cost of living disparities across California. Thus the current system will slowly atrophy as more instructors are hired on a year-to-year basis at administrative whim or placed on 6-year contracts known as "rolling tenure."[39] Jon Weiner explains how cost-conscious administrators can calculate the savings: "The arithmetic is easy: a department with twenty tenured professors each earning $50,000, and each teaching two courses per semester, gives you eighty courses per year for $1 million. A department with one tenured professor (the chairman) paying part-timers $1,500 per course can give you eighty courses per year for about $170,000. Of course the part-timers don't get benefits, so they're even cheaper."[40]

As colleges seek ways to streamline services, apply corporate methods to measure the monetary value of faculty and share resources such as libraries and buildings, they are especially unlikely to consider any

38. Wolfe, "Feudal Culture," *op. cit.*, p. 60. After vigorously advancing corporate ideas to manage the faculty and transform the CSU system, Munitz left the Chancellor's Office in January 1998 to become CEO of the $4.5 billion J. Paul Getty Trust. The national search for his successor was done with lightning speed and shrouded in absolute secrecy. The new job description eliminated the previous criterion of "significant academic accomplishments of the character to command professional respect." The new Chancellor, Charles Reed, was best known for his political skills in annual budget battles. Amy Wallace, "Search for CSU Chief to be Done in Secret," *Los Angeles Times* (August 5, 1997) and Pamela Burdman, "CSU Trustees Pick Florida Educator as Next Chancellor," *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 8, 1997).

39. By 1997, nearly 40% of the 18,000 faculty in the California State University system were already part-timers, well above the national average of 31% for four-year institutions. See Alison Schneider, "More Professors are Working Part Time, and More Teach at 2-Year Colleges," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (March 13, 1998), A15-17.

40. Jon Weiner, "Tenure Trouble," in *Dissent* (Winter 1998), p. 64.

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instruments that assess the administrators' productivity.[41] Whenever former Chancellor Munitz regaled legislators about how he was turning the CSU system into an efficient, responsive teaching institution no one asked him to document his claims. While he maximized the power, prestige and compensation of his middle management, Munitz permitted academic double standards to flourish at the costly new "boutique campus" at Monterey Bay. Its low enrollments, crumbling infrastructure and outrageously high state support costs made it a very expensive campus to operate. The system's 21st campus provided an ominous glimpse of the 21st century.[42] Hardly anyone noticed that Munitz's empty doctrines and contrived shibboleths did nothing to improve educational content.

It is unrealistic to expect that California legislators will reform academic financing when the university itself disregards minimum standards of accountability.[43] The legislature favors default, not design, when it establishes priorities in state budgeting and muddles through a ritual review process with few clearly established goals. Elected officials are not interested in micro-managing universities. Although funding for California higher education had reached a crisis stage requiring decisive changes, legislators had no coherent strategy to cope with it and generally lacked first-hand familiarity with university finances. Without an explicit

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41. Christopher Clausen warns that "as governors and state legislators are increasingly discovering, no obvious educational or other public purpose is well served by such a bloated system. Only the political taboo against closing a campus in any district where people actually still live and vote has kept many state systems from shrinking physically as well as budgetarily." Review of Jane Smiley, *Moo* (New York: Knopf, 1995) in *Academic Questions*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Winter 1995-96), p. 83.

42. William Chance, *A Vision in Progress: The Decision to Establish* a *Public University at Monterey Bay* (San Jose: California Higher Education Policy Center, June 1997); Joe Gelman, "It's a New Age for This California PC Campus," *Los Angeles Daily News* (April 20, 1997); and Richard Ferrier, "Is This Really What We Want?' in *Ventura Star* (April 3, 1997). At this newest CSU campus, set up on the old army base at Fort Ord, one of the learning requirements is called "Vibrancy" which is defined as "an understanding of the interrelationship between intellectual, psychological, spiritual, esthetic, and physical health as it applies to one's own life." With its mission statements and curriculum suffused with New Age ideology, CSU/Monterey Bay is an embarrassing embodiment of the hoary stereotypes for which California is notorious.

43. Doug Willis, "Strange Rituals of Legislature Delay Budget Agreement," *Associated Press* (July 11, 1997). A recent RAND report concluded that post-secondary budgets in California "are no longer considered in the context of what is required to support the needs of the state's higher education sector, but rather what is left that can be spent on it." As for innovative financial restructuring whose consequences should be measured for effectiveness, the report confirmed that "higher education as a sector studies itself less than almost any other enterprise." See Shires, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-68.

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fiscal framework supported by realistic measures for implementation, a safe prognosis is that "California and its colleges and universities will wander in a wilderness of fragmented, ad hoc, short-term reactions."[44]

The fetish of enrollment numbers will drive administrators to mediate faculty relations in monetary terms. Treating higher education as an entitlement, universities aggressively recruit students regardless of adequate preparation, increasingly rely on marketing ideals and extol the language of efficiency as they disconnect scholarly research from instruction as the foundation of academic work. Universities are beginning to function more like academic welfare agencies where a dumbed-down curriculum, student expectations of high grades for minimal effort, and "point and click" learning activities may eventually produce the blue collar workers of the information age.

The process will further alienate faculty dedicated to traditional learning. By downsizing and cost-cutting in the liberal arts fields and diverting resources into money-makers like human resource management, communications arts or corrections, many professors will find that their services are simply no longer required. Those who still advocate the transmission of a strong liberal arts curriculum, seek to promote a common culture of enduring value, or encourage close faculty-student contact in the early years of an undergraduate career will gradually disappear as campuses dispense counterfeit degrees from academic Potemkin Villages and "digital diploma mills."[45]

This debasement of educational content and the decline of tenure are the effects of a free-market, high-tech society undergoing dramatic structural changes. The commercialization of higher education and the commodification of instruction are the underlying forces that give coherence to such seemingly disparate phenomena as grade inflation, course dilution, the growing reliance on migratory instructors, and exhortations that faculty use "affective learning styles" or a "student-faculty co-production of knowledge." As long as the relationship between the changing American political economy and its university system is defined from a management perspective, administrators can be expected to expand the bureaucracy to

44. Frank Bowen and William Pickens, *Shared Responsibility: Strategies to Enhance Quality and Opportunity in California Higher Education* (San Jose: California Higher Education Policy Center, 1996), p. 8. The report explicitly shows how state officials consistently fail to plan how, and at what cost, the next generation of California college students will be educated.

45. David F. Noble, "Digital Diploma Mills: The Automation of Higher Education," *Monthly Review,* Vol. 49, No. 9 (February 1998), pp. 38-52.

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remedy "problems" they helped create in the first place. An ethos of academic consumerism that treats students as customers, the watered-down curriculum, and technologically questionable schemes that provide dollops of "lite info-entertainment" will not result in a better trained workforce in today's cut-throat global economy.

Michael Bérubé predicts that as more administrators "are charmed by the prospect of 'new technologies' that will enhance 'distance learning' [it will] usher in an era of universal education via the Internet — a sort of Microsoft version of the Age of Aquarius."[46] In California, the era is about to dawn.

46. Michael Bérubé, "Why Inefficiency is Good for Universities," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (March 27, 1998). B5.

LEFT CURVE no. 22

Marx/Nietzsche:Nihilism, Revolution and the Eternal Returning, Elizam Escobar; **"The essence is good and all the appearances are evil":** *Interview with Agnes Heller*, Csaba Polony; **Balkan Autopsy**: *Introduction*, C. Polony; ***Ash Oracles***, Jovica Ačin; **The Plight of Czech Gypsies in the Holocaust and Today**, Paul Polansky; **Interview with Paul Polansky**, Gwen Albert; *Friends with Unwashed Faces* (poem), Vojo Sindolic; **Poetry in the Slovene Language**, Boris A. Novak; **A Selection of 20th Century Slovene Poetry**; **OSTranenie 97:** *International Forum of Electronic Media at the Bauhaus of Dessau*, Bálint Szombathy; **The Cutting Edge of Imperialism**, John Horvath; **Sourvenirs, Music and Tourism as Appropriation, or Crispian Does the Magical Mystical Tour and Saves the World**, John Hutnyk; **Wiggers and Wannabes: White Ethnicity in Contemporary Youth Culture**, Martin Daws; **Raymond Williams on Cultural Revolution**, E.San Juan, Jr.; *Sisyphus (for Salman Rusdie)* (poem), Esiaba Irobi; *The Hound Arcane* (poem), Jack Hirschman; **Poetry** by D.Meltzer, Jeffrey F. Crice, Gwen Albert, Moe Seager, Chris Sia, Gordon Massman, Steve Carter, Jim Quinn, Ryuichi Tamura; **millennium [read]ing of d.h.lawrence's UTOPIA**, B. K. Buckley; **Fellow Traveling at Anzio**, Melvin Seiden; **Crashing into the Walls**

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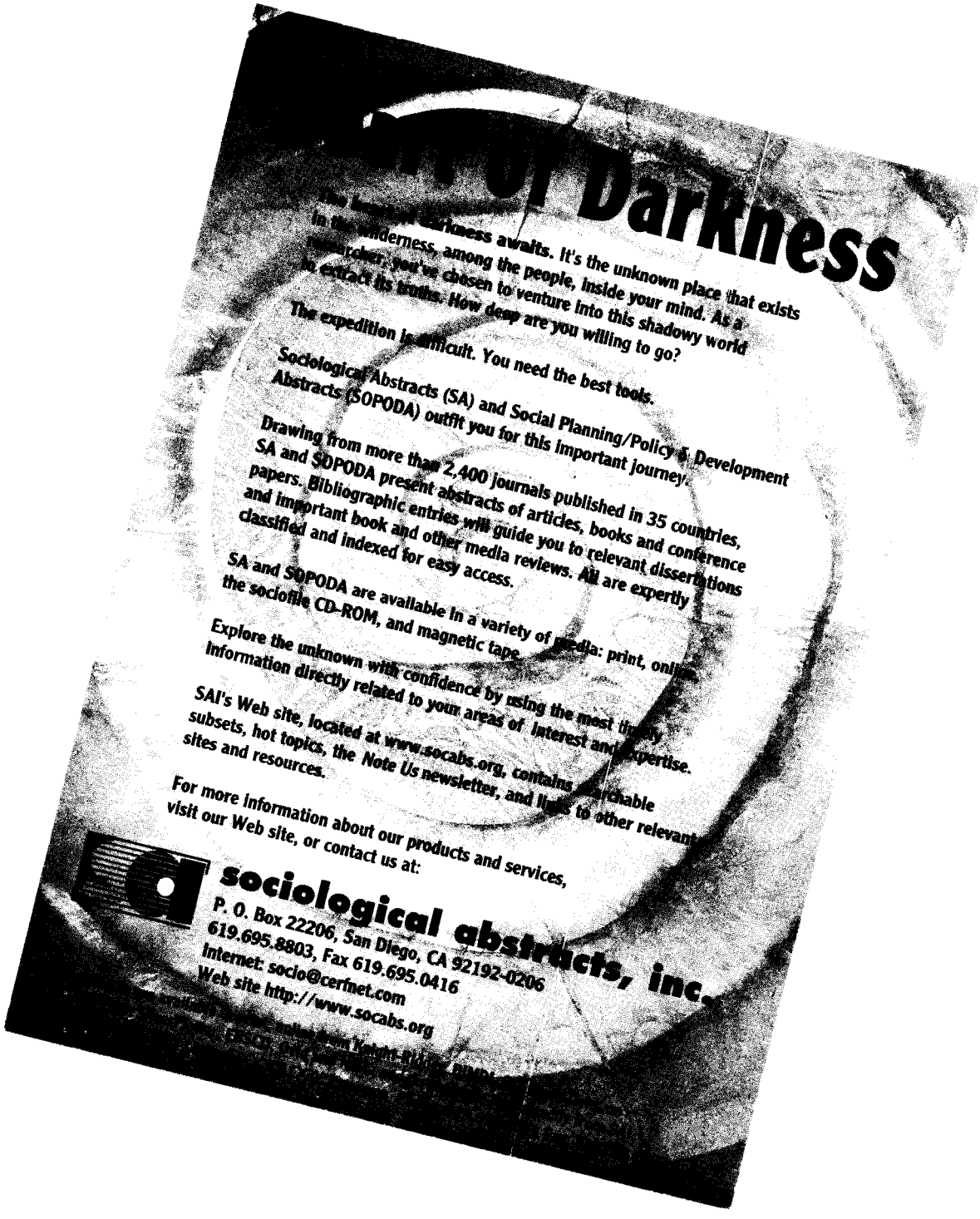
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The New Fragmentation in Higher Education

Michael Taves

Given that higher education, especially at the undergraduate level, is perceived to be bankrupt, what is its future? There have been attempts in various colleges to deal with the fiscal crisis by "reengineering," "restructuring" and "downsizing," while desperately trying to remain "competitive" in the market place for students. Sometimes this is done by devising "innovative new programs" or extensions to old programs, but more often through more effective marketing and especially by investing in physical and technology infrastructure to shore up the perception of institutional "modernity" and "competitiveness." During the 1990s, institutions of higher education have been spending increasing percentages of their total capital and operating budgets on computers and related technologies.[1] Why are traditional liberal arts colleges willing to expend so much of their fiscal resources on technology"? Other than an often genuine interest in pedagogical innovation and vague notions of unproved increases in administrative productivity, the reason often boils down to a fear of competition in the marketplace for new students.

Building these infrastructures is necessary in the information-based economy of the next century. Many institutions, however, do not realize that what they are doing is increasing the competitiveness of an approach to education rapidly becoming obsolete. The tradition of a liberal arts education, long under fire from both conservatives and multiculturalists, is part of an industrial age that no longer exists. The transmission of culture through the liberal arts is something concerning which there is not only no agreement,

1. This percentage has gone from 2.3% in 1989, to 3.7% in 1994 (the last year for which there is aggregate data), and for some of the semi-elite 4-year liberal arts colleges in the East the figure is now well over 4.4%.

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but is no longer even attempted in many public universities. Faculty-centered, top-down information delivery systems, the measurement of educational progress by time-in-classroom and the accumulation of credits as "certified" exclusively by faculty, and higher education's virtual monopoly over the right to credential individuals as "educated" or even "trained" are all under attack and unlikely to last in their present form.

There are increasing complaints that college tuition's are going through the roof and parents are beginning to insist on greater emphasis on undergraduate teaching over specialized research. Especially at so-called "good private institutions," tuition's are well beyond any reasonable limit and there is great pressure to emphasize teaching and be accountable for outcomes. Pressures to fragment traditional liberal arts institutions concerning the transmission of cultural values are likely to increase. In addition, government domination through the often used carrot and stick approach of blackmailing institutions into adopting particular policies and curricula to qualify for federal funding is increasingly perceived as intrusive at worst and wasteful at best. With continued calls to downsize government and growing dissatisfaction with higher education, resentment toward state-run educational systems is likely to grow. Finally, there is widespread dissatisfaction with higher education meddling with the private corporate sector and its intrusion in defining curricula and the direction of university planning through so-called strategic partnerships. The criticism cuts both ways: when all is said and done, the private sector often finds that it can train and educate its people far more efficiently and cost-effectively than traditional institutions of higher education.

Before examining some of the more mainstream criticisms of higher education, consider the following, seemingly contradictory analysis of higher education by Tim Luke. In a contribution to a symposium on "The Crisis of American Education," he lamented the intrusion of market-driven considerations into universities, at the expense of undergraduate teaching: "As the university becomes increasingly implicated in the reproduction of the larger national and transnational economy, its workers are expected to transform it into an informational engine of economic growth and a reserve bank of accumulated conceptual capital. . . . every department becomes an open mutual fund of symbolic values, pooled together as the summation of the faculty's local university and national disciplinary sign value productivity."[2] Condemning this as "a highly

2. Tim Luke, "The Leisure of the Theory Class: Political Correctness or Professional Correctness," in *Telos* 97 (Fall 1993), pp. 98-99.

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destructive form of blaring mercantilism," Luke's conclusion is that "The deployment of mercantilist strategies by a New Class of intellectual producers and consumers in higher educational institutions suggest that there has been a hostile take-over. The high jackers are not renaissance scholars, dedicated teachers or enlightened educators. Rather, they are symbolic analysts, telematic consultants, and informational designers intent on transforming research universities and elite colleges into little mercantilist fiefs in the global networks of the emergent informational economy. Teaching students, building libraries, accumulating truths are all losing propositions in this approach to higher education."[3]

The hostile take-over Luke describes has only begun, but one can already see some of its consequences. In an earlier analysis, however, he had written that all of the traditional functions of institutions of higher learning "can be performed today outside of the university."[4] He went on to cite the success of George Mason University in transforming itself into a corporate-driven success story through strategic partnerships with the private sector: "Yet for every one of these George Masons, there are fifty community or four-year state colleges that function essentially as warehouses for unemployable adolescents until they get their degrees in sociology, business administration or physical education . . . whereupon they go out and work in fast-food restaurants, retail outlets or department stores, where they probably could have found jobs coming out of high school."[5]

From this sorry state of affairs in 1987 and the admission that the George Masons of the higher education world are at least succeeding in preparing the white collar work force, six years later Luke complains about the mercantilism of higher education. Actually, Luke's apparently contradictory analyses are both on the mark. In the mid-1990s it no longer makes sense, as it did in the 1980s, to assault the windmills of traditional higher education. In the future, it will be increasingly necessary to do battle against the worst effects of free market intrusion into the educational process. In this new context, however, the advantage will be that people who actually need the services of the education industry will have something to say about which institutions will succeed and which ones will fail by voting with their free-market feet. As opportunities for learning increasingly fragment along the lines of culturally or occupationally specific identities

3. *Ibid.*, p. 103

4. Tim Luke, Paul Piccone, Fred Siegel and Michael Taves, "The Crisis in Higher Education: Roundtable on Intellectuals and the Academy," in *Telos* 71 (Spring 1987), p. 29.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

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and needs, the traditional model of a higher education in the liberal arts will recede in both attractiveness and praticality.

For the past 30 years, there has been a contradiction between the ideal of traditional liberal arts education (originally meant for the elite and a miserable failure as a mass-educational model) and the real interests of most people in acquiring the skills necessary to succeed in an informational society. The fact is that undergraduate education is now, and has always been, class-based and it is realistic to assign different institutions of higher education to different segments of the population, whether on the basis of class, religious denomination, subcultural identity or levels of personal ambition. Practically all mainstream critiques of higher education point out that, in the context of the new post-industrial, informational society, traditional, especially government-run, educational systems are wasteful and obsolete.[6] They generally argue that, while at least some ". . . college degrees are highly esteemed, the value added by the educational process has become increasingly suspect."[7] From the employer's viewpoint, the value to the degree is not any specific skills but the fact that it documents certain modes of behavior and the mental discipline necessary to graduate.[8] If such is the case, "Does society really have to fund institutions at present levels to provide [this] certification of the ability to learn?"[9] The answer is "probably not." While acquiring mental discipline and advanced analytical skills will likely continue to require the immersion in study characteristic of the most demanding and best liberal arts colleges, informational and knowledge-based courses are best provided pragmatically by whatever means is most efficient in transferring the knowledge from the provider to the learner. Recognizing this reality, and that already there are private sector interlopers offering services far more efficiently and cost effectively, it is natural that we should expect an increasing fragmentation of learning institutions more specifically targeted at particular constituencies.

6. See, e.g., Michael Dolence and Donald Norris, *Transforming Higher Education: A Vision for Learning in the 21st Century* (Ann Arbor, MI: Society for College and University Planning, 1995), and Stan Davis and Jim Botkin, *The Monster Under the Bed: How Business is Mastering the Opportunity of Knowledge for Profit* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994). Davis and Botkin are both renowned business consultants and former academics.

7. William Massey, "New Thinking on Academic Restructuring," in *Priorities* 6 (Winter 1996), p. 3.

8. According to Massey, companies can train people for the skills they need, and "do so on an increasingly massive scale. The importance of the degree, then, may lie in its certification not of learning itself, but of the ability to learn."

9. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

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The key here is information technology.[10] Dolence and Norris estimate that, in order to remain employable, by the year 2000 every individual in the workforce will need to accumulate a learning equivalent of 30 credit hours every seven years.[11] Even if these predictions are exaggerated, the point is that it is impossible to meet the learning needs of this burgeoning population through increasingly expensive institutions of higher education. Already "1/3 of all enrolled students are over 25 years old, and two fifths attend part-time."[12] Of course, campuses will not disappear, but as the need for on-demand access to information and certification increases, "institutions that do not accommodate changes in the use of this information, and are not technologically nimble enough to provide it on demand and in customized segments, may find themselves supplanted by more facile providers."[13] New learning businesses will deliver information, knowledge and education in such different ways and in such vast amounts that they may very well displace schools. Very likely, "over the next few decades the private sector will eclipse the public sector and become the major institution responsible for learning."[14]

In the future, information-based economy of network-accessible scholarship, owning physical facilities will not be as important as "the capacity to measure demonstrated competence and to certify learning."[15] Some large knowledge-based enterprises, such as Andersen Consulting, have already established huge, independent campuses, with student populations and budgets exceeding the largest traditional research institutions. In this respect, higher education is missing the boat in not recognizing the external "threat" of information and knowledge delivery via the private sector, especially to that slice of the population increasingly comfortable with technology-based delivery systems.[16]

10. According to Massey, information technology "can enhance learning productivity by providing access to education 'any time, any place.' The opportunities for independent learning . . . can transform education from a time-based experience, where students advance in lock-step, to a competency-based process where students move at their own pace, and receive certification of mastery when they are ready." *Ibid.*, p. 4.

11. Dolence and Norris, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

12. Cynthia Herbert Adams and David D. Palmer, "Economic Problems and the Future of Higher Education," in *Academe* 24 (January-February, 1993), pp. 22-24.

13. Dolence and Norris, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

14. Davis and Botkin, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Information technologies can deliver education directly, without going through schools. According to Davis and Botkin, *op. cit.*, p. 67: "Adobe's first seminar on electronic photography, for example, bypassed colleges, drew 400 participants, and grossed a quarter million in tuition."

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It is understandable, therefore, why the civil servants of the educational bureaucracies are on the defensive. The role of faculty as talking heads in the classroom addressing passive students, not to mention their specialized "research," does not meet the needs of so-called information-age students. The mere dissemination of information can be handled much more efficiently via electronic networks, and even the "virtual classroom" of audio and video electronic discussion may surpass the physical classroom as a more dynamic way for students to have access to scholar-instructors. Traditional education was predicated on a provider-driven model, where the institution controls both the pace and the content of learning. An information age model requires on-demand access to information, learning and certification of mastery that is customizable, student-centered, self-paced and easily available. Average so-called knowledge workers are estimated to need to spend up to 20% of their career in learning new skills and mastering new bodies of information.

There is a huge, post baby-boom generation of American information workers in continuous need of learning, and they are satisfying these needs outside of the formal context of higher education, because it is far more efficient and less costly to do so. Unlike the state funded education industry, the business community must appropriate new technology in order to survive and remain competitive. With the exception of a few innovative major research universities, traditional liberal arts colleges and universities are less embracing new technologies as they are only reluctantly introducing it under competitive pressures. Inevitably, market needs will make themselves felt in education, and in so doing transform it by increasingly privatizing it. Government control of education may have been justified during periods of nation-building, war mobilization, or while attempting to meet large industrial priorities. Market forces, however, are likely to erode this hegemony by emphasizing economic issues. During the last four decades since the Brown vs the Board of Education Supreme Court decision in 1954, educational systems have been used to implement political and social mandates, putting social ends ahead of the basic educational goals. This has been consistent with non-denominational, publicly-funded education and its over-extended role as the primary socialization agency — something everyone now agrees has been a complete failure.

Public school systems and higher education are failing at providing basic instruction and they are ill equipped to provide the kind of responsive, life-long education required by the future needs of the economy. The introduction of market relations in education will mean competition, service and

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standards, with a particular emphasis on math, science, technology and a mastery of English. New institutions and services will have to appeal to local community and business needs. Private educational institutions are now under considerable pressure to improve their services and satisfy parents. Those institutions nimble enough to adjust to the new realities may survive as refuges for students who still want and are able to afford a residential, time-out educational experience. But large, tax-based, state-run systems are increasingly becoming dinosaurs on their last political leg. Once more affordable, service-oriented and community-responsive educational operations can wage and win the battle over the right to credential, their days are numbered. This fragmentation will occur at all levels, just as it already has in communities providing value-based private alternatives to public school systems they see as bankrupt and as pushing alien value systems. They will be vocational, or training-based, or denominational, or classically-oriented, or simply local and service oriented, and they are likely to provide better and more responsive service.

There is nothing necessarily wrong with this trend toward fragmentation. If one redefines higher education to include a broader variety of institutions with different goals, to serve different populations, there is no longer the contradiction or traditional conflict between the defenders of "the liberal arts" and so-called pragmatists or, horror of horrors, "trainers." Denominationally oriented institutions, for instance, have long been recognized as a legitimate individual educational choice, from early education through advanced degrees. Why not give up the traditional elitism of privileging liberal arts higher education and recognize that a vocational or training approach to knowledge is just what the doctor ordered for large segments of the population? The only reason to continue to cling to the liberal arts mantel is if one truly believes that the smattering of exposure to the humanities in the average business student's curriculum has substantive consequence either for the individual or for society, and many people have long doubted that to be the case. Individuals and society both have pragmatic economic needs, and continuing massive social expenditures on liberal arts higher education for "the masses" is frequently failing to meet those needs. In any case, whether it is good or bad, it appears inevitable that the market and the "customers" will increasingly decide what constitutes the appropriate learning opportunity, and who has the right to credential it.

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*Private Education and Public Administration**

Paul Gottfried

A striking characteristic of today's American education is its acquiescence to public administration. Evidence for this is that proposals for better-funded private education never show how private schools can be kept free of government control. In California, Wisconsin, Michigan and other states, battle lines have been drawn over plans to give public subsidies to students attending private schools. In this confrontation, teachers' unions, public employees, and Left liberals stand predictably on the one side, libertarians and the Christian Right on the other. Vouchers and tax relief have been the remedies offered for the public school monopoly of government funding — a situation Milton Friedman hopes to cure with "educational choice." In early 1997, advocates of this choice inserted their plan into the Republican Party platform, while opponents in the Democratic Party supported the *status quo*. The Republican stress on financial relief for children (or their parents) who opt for private schools has meanwhile been favorably received abroad. The Italian magazine *Ideazione* devoted an entire issue to presenting American ideas about strengthening private education.[1] *Ideazione* underlined the fact that with 93% of its school-age children in public institutions, Italy would do well to consider the voucher plans being debated and occasionally implemented in the US.

More relevant for understanding the privatization issue than the percentage of schools in the public sector is whether there is still a significant

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* An earlier draft of this paper was presented at the Telos Institute's Conference on "The Future of Education" held in Chico, CA, Oct. 18-20, 1996 and has appeared in the *Rockwell Newsletter*, Vol. VIII, No. 12.

1. See the extended dossier on European education and the need for educational choice in *Ideazione*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (July 1996), pp. 131-94.

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difference between public and private education. In Sweden, it was the socialist government which resuscitated private schools in 1992 by authorizing and funding them. The Swedish plan was to create a competitive alternative to public education in the face of state-dominated social services. The Swedes set out to do this by allocating funds and buildings to designated private schools, which have limited control over staff, curricula and admissions. In four years' time, the percentage of such institutions among accredited Swedish schools has risen from 1 to 5%.

The hitch here should be obvious. The state can easily take away what it gives and control what it subsidizes. Thus the largest European organization promoting private educational alternatives, OIDEL (*Organizzazione per lo Sviluppo della Libertà dell' Insegnamento*), published in 1995 a comprehensive report. In ascertaining the degree of instructional freedom in the schools of each country, OIDEL applied four criteria: the legal possibility of creating private schools; the permissibility of religious instruction or of expressing "moral and religious views in public schools"; the availability of funds for non-state schools (*scuole non-statali parificate*); and the relative percentage of private as opposed to public schooling. According to OIDEL's report, Holland stands out among other Western countries for properly privatized education; France, with its predominantly Catholic parochial schools, is somewhere in the middle; and Italy is near the bottom being barely above Greece and Portugal.[2]

Unfortunately, this analysis is misleading. Though Holland has a majority of its students in technically private schools, the institutions they attend are state-controlled. Between 80 and 90% of their expenditures are for salaries, and these are paid out of taxes raised by the state, which imposes on private schools instructional and other guidelines. In an assessment of Dutch education, Denis P. Doyle refers to the system as "one of parallel public schools."[3] A similar evaluation would apply to the French situation, where the state pays part of the salaries and other costs attached to parochial education.

In the US, the same difficulty — high-handed exercise of state power — has marked attempts to create securely financed alternatives to public education. This has been particularly the case with the "school choice"

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2. See Frances C. Fowler, "The French Experience with Public Aid to Education," in *Phi Delta Kappa* (July 1987), p. 327; and Charles Glenn, *Choice of Schools in Six Nations* (Washington, Department of Education, 1989).

3. Denis P. Boyle, "Vouchers for Religious Schools" in *The Public Interest* (Spring 1997), p. 95.

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plans being discussed by neoconservatives, the Christian Right, and even some civil rights activists. Not one of these plans for tax relief or vouchers to be paid to the school of one's choice (or one's parents' choice) has been able to guard against the likelihood of state infringement, as a byproduct of taking state-allocated money. Detailed studies of this likely sequence have been produced by libertarians such as Dwight Lee, Murray N. Rothbard, Llewelyn Rockwell, and Jeffrey Tucker — all of whom criticized California's Proposition 174.[4] A voucher referendum which went down to defeat in 1994, it would have provided $2,600 annually toward the tuition cost of students in private schools. Since their families were already paying for public education, since private schools are absorbing the probably added costs for public instruction that would occur if all students left the private system, and since private schools furnish a competitive market for educational possibilities, etc., it only seemed fair, or so the voucher advocates argued, to give back money to families who patronize private schools.

The libertarian critics' objection is that the state does not do favors for nothing. As in Milwaukee and now in all of Wisconsin, where vouchers have been introduced, participating private schools have made themselves subject to state and federal controls. Parochial schools must either lie or reconstruct themselves to prove that they practice religious diversity and do not put forward one set of religious truths at the expense of other beliefs. They must also furnish proof of racial and gender inclusiveness, under both federal and state laws; and this may lead (if it has not already done so) to the imposition of government-designed quotas. In Milwaukee, where civil rights activist Polly Williams helped establish the local voucher plan, almost half of the recipients are on welfare. This has given rise to a curious consequence: vouchers have become transfer payments from the middle and working classes to the inner city. There they function as a new Head Start — a job-creating operation at public expense. This relief program has not yielded solid educational dividends or benefited proportionately those already strapped with the costs of credible private education.

These and related problems concerning private schooling need to be emphasized, because such a concept is not well understood in the US or Europe. In these countries, the administrative state's entanglement with society is widespread and taken for granted. Thus today state provisions

4. For a collection of probing studies about state-supported privatization of education, see Jeffrey Tucker, *The Voucher Reader* (Auburn: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 1995).

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for private instruction are more welcomed than feared. Given the evolution of the managerial state, political involvement in this enterprise may be inevitable. Through most of this century, the state has used education to socialize citizens and there is no reason to believe this process will stop. Opposition to public administration in the US has grown weak and sporadic, while the federal government has pushed steadily into social activities (particularly child-rearing and value-instruction) without serious resistance.

Most importantly, the government, media, and educating class have been ardently engaged since midcentury in a crusade against "prejudice" and discrimination. This crusade, which is the moral equivalent of war, has come to require the teaching of "sensitivity" in the classroom, as explained in the text of the NEA's recent resolution B-7, "regarding racism, sexism and sexual orientation discrimination." Local schools must have organized plans "to identify and eliminate discrimination and stereotyping in all educational settings." In the US, England, France, Holland and other Western countries, this grandiose therapeutic undertaking has not been left to voluntary efforts. Government education departments and national teachers' unions are insisting on the compulsory indoctrination of students in approved social attitudes. Above all, they warn against "subtle practices" expressing insensitive feelings, and make it incumbent upon schools to cleanse student behavior of "stereotyping and casting."[5]

It would be superfluous here to cite reems of government documents and NEA resolutions about the necessary measures to ensure a caring and sharing student population. Although all of these texts are clumsily-phrased and tendentious, they do indicate a major obstacle to creating or restoring private or even locally-controlled education. Instructing the young has become a vehicle of social indoctrination, and the managerial state and its boosters are not about to give it up.

The problem facing educational decentralizers is their hope for the kind of social space that is no longer politically tolerated. Inasmuch as the state, media and other culture industries in the US are making efforts to eradicate unfashionable opinions with only scattered resistance (for the most part from the religious Right), the momentum toward a uniformly

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5. *U.S. Commisiion on Civil Rights Newsletter* (January 1995). See also Herbert I. Lender's analysis of this directive in *Measure* 128 (April/May 1995), p. 8. For a study of the curricular effects of affirmative action programs which make illuminating use of the hermeneutic of suspicion, see Lino A. Graglia's "'Hate Speech' Codes and 'Political Correctness'," in *Northern Kentucky Law Review*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (1996), pp. 505-14.

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politicized society is not diminishing. Resistance is possible, but historically it has only come from highly cohesive centers of oppositions: i.e., regions, tightly organized hierarchical structures, such as the Roman Catholic Church during the *Kulturkampf* in 19th century Germany, and finally, social classes. Individuals who have "found Christ" and watch Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting channel may feel or express the same concern and even vote the same way. But they do not have the discipline or community to be more than a pressure group trying to influence the Republican Party or demonstrating and lobbying against abortion. They live in a society in which the central government, large corporations, entertainment and the media have combined to create cultural homogeneity and to weaken all sources of authority except for public administration and its ideological defenders. In the US today, social and economic relations are mediated by a central state, usually working hand-in-glove with other corporate monoliths.

It is highly unlikely that even a well-organized regional opposition in the US could have as much impact as the Northern League has had in Italy. While opponents of the central government today are mostly isolated clusters of unkept arms-collectors, in Italy the embattled anti-centralists are increasingly the educated and affluent. Those grouped around the Northern league declared independence for Padania — a region of Northern Italy with a shared cultural and historical sense and a common revulsion for meddling bureaucrats in Rome. Whether the League gets away with its gamble remains to be seen, but what is likely is that it will receive part of what it wants: greater autonomy for self-conscious citizens seeking to govern themselves. The *leghisti* have not moved in a way that should surprise the Roman administration. The Italian assembly was already taking steps toward a federalist reconfiguration of the national government even before the League made its move.

In Italy, there are few private schools and the Italian counterparts of American neoconservatives tell their countrymen that the best path to private education is the one proposed by the Republican Party in the US. What they are peddling is a useless voucher model, which will not bring about truly private schooling. Even more significantly, they ignore what is right in their own country and wrong with the US. Private anything is only possible where the managerial state can be shackled or, in the American case, profoundly humbled. Where that cannot be accomplished, there will be no private schools.

The Republican Party in the US is in moral decline at least partly

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because it has failed to stand for devolution of power. Its national standard bearers pretend they can restore freedom and local rule by guaranteeing and expanding federal entitlements. In the matter of private education, they show cynicism and stupidity by talking about government bail-outs for what until now has been left mercifully out of the public sector. These are the hand-to-mouth substitutes for reining in an overreaching administrative state. While it may be too late to effect a federalist cure, at least proposing one is the task of an honest and principled opposition. Such an opposition must tell the American people that nothing will be private until federal bureaucrats and social engineers have been excluded from local governments. Such distributed power does not ensure family control over schools, but it is a precondition. Without it, the debate over private education will remain what it is: empty noise.

Equally questionable has been the clamoring by parochial schools and conservative religionists for public subsidies and tax reductions, without regard to the likely price that may be incurred. As colleges throughout the country might explain, if they themselves were not reconstructed models of political correctness, taking government aid, even indirectly in the form of veteran loans to students, has meant having to accommodate the state: hiring deans for minority affairs, launching affirmative action programs and having the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission interfere with curicular development have been only some of the costs paid by higher education for government favors. It is foolish for churches to believe that the government will exact more modest concessions from them if they do gain public funding for their schools. It is not primarily a question of fairness, as William Donahue of the Catholic League has maintained in TV debates, that parents who send their children to religiously affiliated schools should get back some of their tax money. It is rather a question of what parents and educators will lose if their claim to fairness is acceded to. Very likely, radical secularizers, such as those in the ACLU and People for the American Way, will soon learn the obvious truth, that instead of trying to starve parochial education by denying it any state support, it may be more useful for social change for the government to provide parochial institutions with highly restricted grants. That way public administrators will be seen not as muscling in but as exacting a fair price for their favors. If private educators value independence, they are justified in suspecting the worst in this matter. They should look around and see what has happened to others who have traded their already endangered spheres of freedom for state-supported privacy.

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The Crisis of the Humanities and the End of the University

David Pan

John Henry Newman begins his *Idea of a University* by claiming that the university "is a place of *teaching* universal *knowledge*."[1] But instead of referring to "universal" and all inclusive as Newman suggests, the word *university* was originally derived from the medieval Latin sense of *universitas*, meaning "a society, company, corporation, or community regarded collectively."[2] Newman's effacement of the corporate origins of the university in favor of universality reflects a transformation of the university in the course of the 19th century from a corporate body with particularist interests to one with a claim to an autonomous universality transcending all particular localities, prejudices and traditions.

The connection between the university and universality has remained dominant up to the present. Frank M. Turner notes that "no alternative rhetoric has succeeded in substituting itself for Newman's in the sphere of public discourse on higher education."[3] In an earlier discussion of higher education, for example, Pierre Bourdieu claims that intellectuals "have constituted themselves as they are in and by their rejection of particularisms. By proclaiming themselves defenders of the universal or, as Husserl said of philosophers, as 'functionaries of humanity,' they have somehow committed themselves, by means of a kind of collective oath, to a model

1. John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, ed. by Frank M. Turner (New Haven: Yale UP, 1996), p. 3.

2. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), s.v. university.

3. Turner, "Newman's University and Ours" in Newman, *The Idea of a University*, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

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of the universal intellectual."[4] Because the knowledge produced at universities is held to be objective and universal, academics claim to provide for society a moral center protected from the prejudices of sectarian religious and political interests as well as from instrumentalization by a technocratic government and a capitalist economy. "The struggle for autonomy is thus, first and foremost, a struggle against those institutions and their agents which, from within their disciplines, introduce dependence with regard to external economic, political and religious powers."[5] Faced with these outside powers threatening to functionalize all of society, universities provide "havens for useless knowledge, i.e., knowledge lacking immediate sociopolitical instrumentability."[6] The pure pursuit of knowledge becomes the activity which guarantees the spiritual vitality and the moral authority of the university, and the critique of the university is a critique of its abandonment of universality in favor of narrow practicality: "Thus today tenure and its pursuit exclude as a dispensable luxury or waste of time the very possibility of dealing with universality, in favor of a narrow technicization of thought and knowledge."[7]

From this perspective, "the spiritual crisis of the university coincides with that of the humanities."[8] The humanities offer an intellectual space in which knowledge is pursued for its own sake and all practical interests are kept at bay. Based on this neutral perspective, the humanities implemented "[t]he university's noble task of providing society its self-consciousness" which, however, "today has fallen victim to the general demise of symbols and the university's institutional lack of spirit."[9] Present-day defenders of university autonomy perceive the decline of the humanities as part of a general decline of culture in favor of instrumentalization.

The "culture wars" debate began as the realization by multiculturalists that the humanities as they were being taught in the US were not neutral and free of external interests, but were in fact being used to support a particular system of values based in a Western tradition. By revealing the particularity of the values motivating the teaching of the humanities, the

4. Pierre Bourdieu, "The Corporatism of the Universal: The Role of Intellectuals in the Modern World," in *Telos* 81 (Fall 1989), p. 110.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

6. Claude Karnoouh, "Notes on the Crisis of the University," in *Telos* 81 (Fall 1989), p. 113.

7. Paul Piccone, "The Reuniversalization of the University?" in *Telos* 81 (Fall 1989), p. 124.

8. Karnoouh, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

9. Klaus Heinrich, "The Spiritual Impoverishment of the University," in *Telos* 81 (Fall 1989), p. 95.

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multiculturalists threatened the objective and neutral stance which legitimated the university's role as an expensive producer of "useless knowledge." But if the universities could no longer claim a higher, objective ground from which to look down upon and criticize the sectarian and materialist world around them, then their status and claim to resources would be drastically reduced. They would no longer be able to derive "their authority from the unwritten laws of ethical and scientific universalism in order to practice moral leadership and, on occasion, to instigate collective mobilization in the battle to extend the values of their particular fileds [*sic*] to all of society." They would lose the moral authority with which "intellectuals asserted their right to transgress the most sacred values of the collectivity . . . in the name of values transcending and superseding parochial ones."[10] In fact, a radical multiculturalism which conceives of the humanities as a producer of particular rather than universal values threatens the entire basis of knowledge in which, "since the Renaissance, intellectual judgment has replaced divine judgment, and intellect as such has assumed all the godly attributes of spirit."[11]

Maybe the idea of universality has only served to hide how the underlying "gild" character of the medieval university remains the basis of the "professionalism" of the modern university. If this is the case, the decline of both university autonomy and the humanities may only reflect the demise of a particular notion of culture which has used the idea of universality to legitimate its hegemony. In place of the myth of universality, higher education could be returning to a more democratic determination of the particular relation between knowledge and values.

Multiculturalists never attempted such a thorough-going critique of the university, nor did they challenge the universalist claims of the humanities. Instead, they limited themselves to a critique of the Western culture curriculum in order to offer a more "objective," multicultural basis for university education. They continued the old humanist project by replacing the Western culture curriculum with a multicultural one in order to render it more cosmopolitan. Yet by opening up humanities education to a political dimension which had hitherto been suppressed in the name of universalism, their critique has coincided with a much deeper critique of the humanities that has been reflected in declining enrollments but only sporadically articulated, most vociferously by the religious Right. As Frank M. Turner has noted: "Both the religious and secular critics seek to

10. Bourdieu, *op. cit.*, p. 101.
11. Heinrich, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

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find or impose a wider framework of truth or understanding within which the university and its activities should function."[12]

University intellectuals like Turner generally attack such attempts at imposing a "wider framework of truth" as a sign of "new provincialisms" and "exclusionist tendencies" which "constitute the xenophobic mentality of the small town located far from the major metropolis, where wider learning, excitement, and opportunity abound."[13] Turner's defense of the liberal arts is typical in that it views the humanities as the last refuge for a vision of knowledge which still holds to a notion of universality transcending narrow prejudices, petty politics and a venal materialism. But as recent critics of the Enlightenment have insisted, knowledge is never universal nor value-free. It is always particular and value-laden, dependent on prejudice and tradition for its very existence. Using arguments developed by David Hume, Edmund Burke, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Alasdair MacIntyre, John Tate has shown that "reason is defined by its conditional reliance on a prior evaluative context of tradition. To the extent that reason cannot critically evaluate its own preconditions, it lacks autonomy and cannot provide the basis of its own legitimacy."[14] A prior context of values is necessary for knowledge to constitute itself, and the attempt to separate knowledge from values merely obscures the prejudices which underlie its construction.

The contemporary claims for universality and university autonomy form part of a theory of knowledge which permeates the structure of the modern university. Established in the course of the 19th century, it presupposes an Enlightenment understanding of knowledge which has only succeeded in replacing one value system for another as the basis of knowledge while hiding the fact that the new value system is just as particular and prejudicial as the former one. Though most histories have described this transformation of higher education as progress toward the universalism and objectivity of the modern university,[15] recent research has taken an alternative view, suggesting that the move from particularity to universality as the organizing principle of the university has in fact

12. Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 287.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 298.
14. John W. Tate, "The Hermeneutic Circle vs. the Enlightenment," *Telos* 111 (Winter 1998), pp. 9-10.
15. See Richard Hofstadter and Walter P. Metzger, *The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955); Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962); and Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1965).

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been only an historical phase marked by an increasingly secular, nation-state determination of university affairs which replaced an earlier denominational and local control.[16]

Early American Colleges

As opposed to the present system in which the research university has become the dominant model, American higher education from the colonial period up until about the time of the war between the states consisted almost exclusively of schools based on the English college model, though, as Hofstadter and Metzger outline, there were three important differences which separated American colleges from their English counterparts.

First, the lack of concentration of population and capital in America made it impractical to organize colleges together into a university, and in America the colleges were scattered throughout the country rather than clustered. This characteristic was often seen as the primary advantage of the American college system. "Theron Baldwin, the 'Father of Western Colleges,' noted in 1854 that: 'It is one of the glories of American colleges, that they are not concentrated into one vast University, but scattered far and wide among the people; each one filling its sphere, availing itself of local associations and local sympathies, and standing up there as the visible and ever present representative of liberal and Christian learning.'"[17] Another 19th century commentator noted with satisfaction that the local character of colleges meant that they were brought "into closer connection with the wants and wishes of the people."[18]

Second, the religious pluralism of American culture led to a diversity in the college system in which each college was controlled by one of a variety of religious denominations. With the exception of a handful of state schools, the overwhelming majority of American colleges before the war between the states were under the control of one of 15 different religious denominations,[19]

16. For this alternative account of the development of higher education, see Julie Reuben, *The Making of the Modern University: Intellectual Transformation and the Marginalization of Morality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) and William C. Ringenberg, *The Christian College: A History of Protestant Higher Education in America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian University Press and William B. Eerdmans, 1984).

17. Donald G. Tewksbury, *The Founding of America Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War: With Particular Reference to the Religious Influences Bearing Upon the College Movement* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1932; reprint, Archon Books, 1965), p. 4.

18. W. S. Tyler, *Colleges: Their Place Among American Institutions* (pamphlet, 1857), pp. 9, 11 and 26, cited in Tewksbury, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

19. Tewksbury, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

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and every college was defined by both its proximity to a particular locality and its affiliation with a particular denomination.

Third, as opposed to European universities based on a model of professorial self-governance, each American college was governed by a board which consisted of members of the outside community.[20] Though they disapprove of such community control because it threatens to impair academic freedom, Hofstadter and Metzger show how the characteristics of Protestantism led to this democratic and anti-elitist structure of the college. "American Protestants did not consider that they were destroying intellectual freedom by extending the policy of lay government from churches to colleges. Indeed they considered it one of their contributions to civilization that they had broken up the priestly autonomy of advanced education and had brought it under the control of the community."[21] This community control was mediated primarily through the churches. "Religious concerns determined the structure of higher education. Most colleges had official ties to a religious denomination, and many were controlled by boards of trustees dominated by ministers. College presidents (and many of the faculty) were typically ministers. Ministerial control guaranteed that knowledge of God's creation was properly interpreted in light of divine revelation."[22] Similarly, Tewksbury notes not only that "our colonial colleges were largely religious in origin and character" but also that, "with the exception of a few state universities practically all the colleges founded between the Revolution and the Civil War were organized, supported, and in most cases controlled by religious interests."[23] When the governing boards were not made up strictly of members of one religious denomination, other denominations were represented based on their influence in the local community.[24]

The type of education was more similar to that of a secondary school or a German *Gymnasium* than to that of a university.[25] The students generally lived in dormitories, as in England, and were subject to strict discipline.

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20. Hofstadter and Metzger, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-151.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
22. Reuben, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
23. Tewksbury, *op. cit.*, p. 55. Cf. also John S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy, *Higher Education in Transition: A History of American Colleges and Universities*, 4th ed. (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1997) p. 6: "The desire of important religious denominations (such as the Anglican and Calvinist) for a literate, college-trained clergy was probably the most important single factor explaining the founding of the colonial colleges."
24. Hofstadter and Metzger, *op. cit.*, p. 117.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 224.

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Each school day began and ended with compulsory chapel, and the prescribed curriculum before the war between the states "consisted chiefly of studies in Latin, Greek, mathematics, logic, and moral philosophy, with occasional smatterings of Hebrew and rather elementary physics and astronomy."[26] The point of the curriculum was not to prepare students for further study nor to inculcate a sense of American identity, but rather to provide an education grounded in specific moral assumptions for future clergymen and public servants. Accordingly, the professors did not conduct research and were usually recent graduates who were themselves waiting to find positions as ministers.[27]

The training of ministers remained a primary goal of college education until the war between the states. "Within a sample group of representative institutions, a little more than one half the graduates became ministers at the opening of the 18th century; by 1761 about 37 percent; and by 1801, about 22 percent. The religious revivalism of the early 19th century and the decline of Enlightenment radicalism brought the figure back to a little more than 30 percent by 1836, but another long period of decline soon began which brought the figure to about 20 percent in 1861, 11 percent in 1881, and 6 percent in 1900."[28] Because they were generally founded in order to train ministers, virtually all colleges in this period were affiliated with one of the various religious denominations. Even the state institutions founded at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century soon became dominated by a religious denomination.[29]

Knowledge in colonial colleges until the mid-18th century was clearly subordinate to religious revelation. As Mark Noll points out concerning this period: "A student, in the words of Harvard's earliest set of 'Rules, and Precepts,' was to 'be plainly instructed, and earnestly pressed to consider well, the maine end of his life and studies is, *to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternall life* . . . and therefore to lay Christ in the bottome, as the only foundation of all sound Knowledge and Learning.' The result was wholistic education which gave nature its due while reserving the essential framework, in both personal lives and academic

26. Richard Hofstadter and C. DeWitt Hardy, *The Development and Scope of Higher Education in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), p. 11. Cf. Brubacher and Rudy, *op. cit.*, p. 13, who note, in addition to the Greek and Latin classics, "Aramaic, Syriac, Hebrew, ethics, politics, physics, mathematics, botany, and divinity."

27. Hofstadter and Hardy, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

29. "In most cases, the control of these supposedly secular, public institutions was captured by sectarians." Brubacher and Rudy, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

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instruction, for grace."[30] All knowledge was subordinate to the moral framework dictated by religious revelation, and even those students who did not plan to become ministers naturally accepted this framework as well.[31]

Universal Knowledge

Beginning in the two decades immediately preceding the American Revolution, the religious particularity of American colleges was slowly being eroded by ideas from the Enlightenment and a nascent nationalism. From the early dependence on a surrounding community and religious traditions, colleges began the process of transformation into places of "universal" knowledge. This change began as a revision of the relation between faith and knowledge: "where Puritan education had proceeded from a Christian perspective which sought to dominate the shape, purposes, and structure of learning, leaders in America's Christian colleges after the Revolution allowed truths of the didactic Enlightenment to lay out the shape, purposes, and structure of knowledge within which they were delighted to find a place for Christianity."[32] Rather than conceiving of all knowledge as a consequence and outgrowth of a pre-existing religious perspective, the idea of universal knowledge began to gain ground. According to this view, rather than acting as the foundation of knowledge and therefore existing prior to the pursuit of knowledge, sacred truths and ethics began to be taken as a part of knowledge itself, which could be debated and researched as if they were part of the material world.

The legitimacy of this universalist perspective on higher education slowly gained ground in the course of the 19th century. "In an article, 'The Nobility of Knowledge,' published in 1874, Harvard chemistry professor Josiah Cooke pronounced that 'all truth is one and inseparable.'

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30. Mark A. Noll, "Introduction" in William C. Ringenberg, *The Christian College: A History of Protestant Higher Education in America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian University Press and William B. Eerdmans, 1984), p. 9.

31. "That students planning for secular lives, notably for public leadership, would go to the college [17th century Harvard] was undoubtedly expected, but no one thought that their interests required a different curriculum from those of future clerics. . . . It may be a just summation to say that while Harvard's purposes were not conceived to be secular — since nothing was entirely secular in a Holy Commonwealth — they were not entirely ecclesiastical. It was also implicitly understood that the teaching in the college would be committed to the doctrinal orthodoxy of the New England Congregational Way; and if no formal tests or oaths of conformity were imposed, it was not because conformity was not expected but because the community was at the beginning so homogeneous in religious conviction that such requirements were felt to be superfluous." Hofstadter and Metzger, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-84.

32. Noll, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

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Cooke did not need to explain or defend this statement; he was simply repeating a truism of his age. In the nineteenth century educated Americans believed in the ideal of the 'unity of truth.' The unity of truth entailed two important propositions. First, it supposed that all truths agreed and ultimately could be related to one another in a single system. Second, it assumed that knowledge had a moral dimension. To know the 'true,' according to this ideal, was to know the 'good.'"[33] The crucial assumptions in this theory of knowledge are that all knowledge exists objectively as a unified system even prior to human conceptualization and that ethics and the sacred must be conceived as forms of knowledge not qualitatively distinguishable from other forms of knowledge such as physics or history. A divine reality and a mundane reality exist on the same plane within a totality which can be gazed upon imperially by the subject. Describing the Cartesian and Ramist roots of this transformation in relation to the divine, Catherine Pickstock writes that "space becomes a pseudo-eternity which, unlike genuine eternity, is fully comprehensive to the human gaze, and yet supposedly secure from the ravages of time."[34] The foundation of knowledge was no longer the revealed truth of a particular religious perspective, but the totality of the world itself, which was presumed to contain everything, including ethics and the sacred, within a unified, homogeneous space subject to human conceptualization.

Knowledge and Values

This view of knowledge received its articulation as a vision of the university with John Henry Newman's attempt in Great Britain to distinguish and separate a secular tradition of knowledge from a sacred one. Though the main goals of Newman's lectures were to retain theology as an essential discipline at universities and to maintain universities primarily as teaching rather than as research institutions, the growing acceptance of his main argument for the separation of knowledge from values tended, ironically, to undermine rather than support these goals, thereby establishing the basic distinction of the research culture according to which American universities would be organized during the 20th century.

Newman separates secular from sacred knowledge in order to respond to scientists who wish to discredit theology on the basis of natural scientific

33. Josiah Cook, "The Nobility of Knowledge," in *Popular Science Monthly*, No. 5 (1874), p. 621. Cited in Reuben, p. 17.

34. Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1997), p. 48.

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laws. He insists that both natural science and theology have their own proper fields of vision, and neither has the right to trespass on the field of the other. The typical consequence of this Kantian argument, which the natural scientist often cites, is that theology can say nothing about hypotheses developed, for instance, in physics in order to give a physical explanation of the world. Newman argues that the natural scientist often falls into error by ignoring the corollary — namely that the natural scientist can say nothing about the metaphysical world. The physicist's insights are only hypotheses regarding physical mechanics and not facts about reality as such. The moment the physicist presumes to give an exhaustive explanation of the facts of reality, he or she has crossed over the boundary and intruded into disciplines like philosophy and theology. A natural scientist's argument against the efficacy of prayer must then be considered an attempt to deny the existence of any facts not purely physical (for instance, the existence of God) and consequently to make unjustified judgments concerning a metaphysical reality: "if a people prays, and the wind changes, the rain ceases, the sun shines, and the harvest is safely housed, when no one expected it, our Professor may, if he will, consult the barometer, discourse about the atmosphere, and throw what has happened into an equation, ingenious, even though it be not true; but should he proceed to rest the phenomenon, in matter of fact, simply upon a physical cause, to the exclusion of a divine, and to say that the given case actually belongs to his science because other like cases do, I must tell him, *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*; he is making his particular craft usurp and occupy the universe."[35]

Newman's separation of sacred from secular knowledge is meant to defend the former from encroachment by secularist scientists. But he pays a high price for this strategy. With the acceptance of a separation of secular and sacred knowledge into two separate but equivalent spheres, he must also accept an idea of universal knowledge which detaches secular knowledge from the values of the sacred sphere. Newman then presumes that knowledge can be pursued in isolation from a pre-existing value system: "Knowledge is capable of being its own end."[36] He defends this notion of knowledge by appealing to an ideal of "liberal arts" in which knowledge is pursued and obtained as a free intellectual exercise independent of practical applications, and he compares liberal learning to recreational pursuits such as sports activities and hobbies. Like a strong and healthy body, intellectual development is valuable in itself: "Manly

35. Newman, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

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games, or games of skill, or military prowess, though bodily, are, it seems, accounted liberal; on the other hand, what is merely professional, though highly intellectual, nay, though liberal in comparison of trade and manual labour, is not simply called liberal, and mercantile occupations are not liberal at all. Why this distinction? because that alone is liberal knowledge, which stands on its own pretensions, which is independent of sequel, expects no complement, refuses to be informed (as it is called) by any end, or absorbed into any art, in order duly to present itself to our contemplation."[37] This view of knowledge as a liberal pursuit separates it from both practical and moral purposes: "for I consider Knowledge to have its end in itself. For all its friends, or its enemies, may say, I insist upon it, that it is as real a mistake to burden it with virtue or religion as with the mechanical arts."[38]

In his idea of knowledge for its own sake, Newman accepts the possibility of an objective knowledge unencumbered by any presuppositions which derive from a moral or religious sphere. This seeming independence of knowledge from values depends on his view that science is a matter of constructing a model of the universe which corresponds to the true original. As he put it, "all knowledge forms one whole, because its subject-matter is one; for the universe in its length and breadth is so intimately knit together, that we cannot separate off portion from portion, and operation from operation, except by a mental abstraction."[39] In such an endeavor, each discipline deals with a piece of the puzzle in which the whole corresponds to the universe. This representational model of science can only function if one assumes a static universe in which it exists like a single finished work directly accessible to an independent and sovereign intellect. In this model, the totality of knowledge coincides with the totality of the subject's gaze rather than the totality given by a divine perspective.[40]

Within this framework, the division of knowledge into separate disciplines is a necessary human construct resulting from the finite capacity but unlimited scope of the human gaze. Though humans cannot in practice perceive the entire truth of the world at once because of their limited lifespans, the idea that the universe is an objective and universal whole directly accessible to human understanding means that such a cognition of

37. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
40. For a discussion of the subjective gaze as the epistemological foundation of knowledge in modernity, see Pickstock, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-88.

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the whole is in fact possible given enough time. The separation of the disciplines functions as a division of labor allowing progress toward the final cognition of the whole of the universe. An understanding of the totality could be achieved by relating all the disciplines to each other.

Since objective and universal truth, according to this view of knowledge, can be attained through the effort to exhaustively map out the universe until everything has been known, this unity can exist prior to any determination of values. This possibility of "value-free" knowledge determines the role of theology at the university. In his argument for the necessary inclusion of theology as a field of study in the university, Newman argues that theology is an essential element of the totality of human knowledge and cannot be excluded from university education without distorting the whole: "if the various branches of knowledge, which are the matter of teaching in a University, so hang together, that none can be neglected without prejudice to the perfection of the rest, and if Theology be a branch of knowledge, of wide reception, of philosophical structure, of unutterable importance, and of supreme influence, to what conclusion are we brought from these two premises but this? that to withdraw Theology from the public schools is to impair the completeness and to invalidate the trustworthiness of all that is actually taught in them."[41] Newman argues that, since the disciplines are not competent to decide values, the inclusion of theology at the university is necessary to provide the moral grounding for the pursuit of knowledge. Theology's task is to inquire into the metaphysical values which would otherwise be missing at the university. Theology and only theology should carry on such discussions, but by the same token theology's influence on the university must be limited to its establishment as a department amongst others.

Because he relies on a notion of universal knowledge in which all learning is an approach toward the one truth of a universe including both material and moral truth, Newman does not recognize that all knowledge already presupposes an ethical dimension. By claiming to be able to detach this dimension from knowledge and place it in a department of theology, his ideal of liberal learning subordinates theology to a totality determined by the gaze of the subject and isolates the disciplines from an overarching theological viewpoint. Since a practical and ethical framework is implicit in every decision to pursue a particular topic of research, the banishment of all conscious consideration of values to theology departments means that Newman's approach can only function with the

41. Newman, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

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assumption that all members of the university community share a commitment to a basic set of values determined by the theologians. But Newman himself undermines this unity of values by dividing knowledge into a secular and a sacred tradition, creating a dual system of values, each with its own independent dynamics. For Newman, the development of science and literature has followed a progressive and objective course toward truth in secular knowledge during the history of mankind which parallels the progression of sacred truth in the history of Judeo-Christianity. These two developments are independent, and it is only coincidental that the development of Western civilization — the only true "Civilization" — occurred in the same general geographical area and time span as the development of Judeo-Christian religions, "the only true religion."[42]

This separation of secular from sacred knowledge already assumes a secular framework for constructing the totality of knowledge in which both the secular and the sacred exist on the same plane of experience. While the sacred had previously functioned as a metaphysical determination of the structures of knowledge, it must now be consigned to a finite position within a larger framework determined by the subject. By separating secular from sacred knowledge, Newman's idea of universal knowledge reproduces the epistemological foundation of a secular understanding of the university. Though framed as an argument for theology's indispensability, Newman's claim that it is possible to pursue knowlege for its own sake merely paves the way for the secularization of the ethical dimension of knowledge at the university. Since all knowledge is dependent on some type of pre-existing values in order to constitute itself at all, when Newman ignores this context and attempts to maintain the simultaneous validity of both a sacred and a secular tradition, he is in fact subordinating theology to a secular framework. Though he argues for an insertion of Catholic theology into the university, the role he assigns theology of merely staying within its designated sphere without attempting to influence research and teaching in other fields allows secular learning to determine its own value orientations independent of theology.

In using Newman's model of the university, American higher education has found it all too easy to accept his view of liberal learning, on the one hand, and then exclude theology from the university, on the other. This development is not a misuse of Newman's ideas, but was a result of the contradictions inherent to them. By arguing that secular culture forms a unified whole that can be traced in the progress of the "Civilization" which

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 169-70.

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developed around the Mediterranean basin, Newman established the idea of a secular humanist tradition. This idea cannot exist alongside but can only replace a religious totalization of knowledge which would form the basis for understanding the world as a part of a divine rather than human totality. When Newman assumes that the totality exists in the things themselves and will reveal itself with the increasing progress of both secular and sacred knowledge, each in its own sphere, he is in fact abandoning the hope of maintaining a sacred totality which suffuses all knowledge.

This complicity in the banishment of a religious perspective from the university becomes clear when one compares his view of culture with that of Matthew Arnold, who takes a similar view that Western civilization is the site of a steady progress toward a universal truth. The only difference between their two visions of culture is that, while Newman views the secular tradition as without ethical content and maintains that its pursuit can only be justified as the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, Arnold maintains that a moral imperative necessarily attaches to the development of secular culture: "As I have said on former occasion: 'It is in making endless additions to itself, in the endless expansion of its powers, in endless growth in wisdom and beauty, that the spirit of the human race finds its ideal. To reach this ideal, culture is an indispensable aid, and that is the true value of culture.' (Arnold, *A French Eton*, 1864)"[43] Culture is not valuable as an end in itself but only as part of the continuing march toward human perfection. Indeed, for Arnold the consideration of an activity as an end in itself reduces that activity to mere machinery. "The moment we disjoin [bodily health and vigour] from the idea of a perfect spiritual condition, and pursue them, as we do pursue them, for their own sake and as ends in themselves, our worship of them becomes as mere worship of machinery, as our worship of wealth or population, and as unintelligent and vulgarising a worship as that is."[44]

As we have already seen, Newman's separation of secular from sacred culture depends on the idea of universal knowledge on which the modern university is based. The attempt to separate knowledge from values only succeeds in suppressing sacred values in the construction of knowledge in order to make way for an alternative value system to provide the organizing structure which knowledge needs in order to constitute itself. By positing a secular tradition, Newman already sets up the values which Arnold

43. Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy and Other Writings*, ed. by Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 62.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

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uses to defend this secular tradition as a replacement for a religious tradition as an ultimate value system: "In thus making sweetness and light to be characters of perfection, culture is of like spirit with poetry, follows one law with poetry. Far more than on our freedom, our population, and our industrialism, many amongst us rely upon our religious organisations to save us. I have called religion a yet more important manifestation of human nature than poetry, because it has worked on a broader scale for perfection, and with greater masses of men. But the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all its sides, which is the dominant idea of poetry, is a true and invaluable idea, though it has not yet had the success that the idea of conquering the obvious faults of our animality, and of a human nature perfect on the moral side — which is the dominant idea of religion — has been enabled to have; and it is destined, adding to itself the religious idea of a devout energy, to transform and govern the other."[45] With the advance of culture to the level attained in 19th century England, Arnold perceives religion as another form of machinery, a means which remains subordinate to poetry as the final apotheosis of human culture.

The major problem with this understanding of culture is not so much that it ethnocentrically privileges European culture, but that it privileges written texts over oral ones, preserved relics over living human interaction. This textual tradition tries to replace oral traditions and ritual practices in determining ethics, university professors gradually becoming the priests of this cultural order. This abstract, text-based culture no longer is grounded in particular communities or congregations in which ritualized human interaction determines ethics, but in an abstract textual world. The attempt to ground culture in texts only succeeds in allowing another force from outside the texts to create the unity of a textual tradition.

The Rise of the University

The growing acceptance in the 19th century of the separation of secular from sacred knowledge espoused by Newman prepared the intellectual climate in the U.S. for the introduction of the German model of the research university, whose structures were initially established by Wilhelm von Humboldt in the first decade of the 19th century. From the very beginning, Humboldt's model was based on the subordination of education to the interests of the state. In contrast to the early proliferation of separate institutes for different specializations, which characterized research in the 18th century, Humboldt not only unified teaching and

45. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

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research at the University of Berlin but also sought to consolidate the separate institutes into one.[46] His plan for the university established not only the institutional but also the moral framework in which knowledge would serve the interests of the Prussion state.[47]

In the US, Humboldt's model of the research university replaced a system of higher education which was not based on the interests of the state but on local and denominationally-defined communities. The primary goal of the earlier college system was to maintain a particular denominational perspective on knowledge. But the desire to develop a Congregationalist or Presbyterian view of the world did not simply arise out of petty sectarian disputes as historians of education such as Hofstadter and Metzger claim.[48] Denominational college education was based on a theory of knowledge that understands it as always value-laden rather than value-free and a theory of culture which sees its locus in human interaction rather than in a set of texts. In such colleges, a religious denomination integrated knowledge and the disciplines into a moral and metaphysical framework which existed outside the college as the Congregationalist (Harvard and

46. "The great advance over and the decisive difference from the previous century's idea of the university was that the new university had the task of uniting teaching and research in close interaction, whereby knowledge was not only to be transmitted but also produced. The disciplines were also to function in close interaction to embody anew the *universitas literarum*, in contrast to the common 18th century practice of supporting particular branches of science in separate institutes." Siegfried A. Kaehler, *Wilhelm v. Humboldt und der Staat: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte deutscher Lebensgestaltung um 1800*, 2d ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), pp. 231-2.

47. "It was in this respect that the superiority of German science, which he praised to Madame von Stael from Rome, seemed to him to be guaranteed. He saw in it a promotional force for the home state, which, in supporting and protecting science 'would be able to have the most decisive intellectual and moral influence on the cultivation of the entire linguistically unified nation.' This influence was not to be pursued for the sake of the 'pure idea.' Humboldt recognized that the university, in contrast to an academy, 'was more intimately bound to the interests of the state.' From this fact he concluded that 'Prussia, in place of its earlier possession of great political power, should now gain a moral one' — a thought which seemed to be related to the 'founding words' of Friedrich Wilhelm III, but of course less realistically conceived and more directly targeted toward that cultural significance in the world which he referred to already in 1808. And there is no doubt that the University of Berlin fulfilled Humboldt's idea and provided for the Prussian state in its slow rise to the leadership of the German people an irreplacable moral or, more clearly and precisely phrased, spiritual comradeship." Kaehler, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

48. Hofstadter and Metzger, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-119, 209-222. Reuben notes that, though Hofstadter "depicted the antebellum college as narrowly sectarian and repressive in its piety . . . more recent scholarship has challenged this view and depicted the colleges as broadly 'Christian'." Reuben, *op. cit.*, p. 276, n. 14. Actually, both depictions have some truth to them. Though these colleges retained their sectarian character, the growth of the idea of "unitary truth" had already begun to homogenize education.

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Yale) or Presbyterian (Princeton) or Baptist (Brown) or Anglican (King's College, later Columbia) church. Consequently, the dependence of the colleges on private funding from these churches was an expression of their rootedness in values and needs in the outside community. Religious pluralism led to a "multicultural" environment in which public funding of colleges would have meant the privileging of one religion over the others, leading to its eventual establishment as a state religion.

The secularization of colleges in the US and the federal funding of higher education established the humanities as this secular religion. By taking religion out of the college, educators claimed to be freeing knowledge from outside prejudices and unwarranted interventions. But this supposedly neutral religious stance laid the groundwork for the development of a secular culture which was to supplant the prior diversity of religious cultures.[49] The attempt to turn religion into a purely private matter, having no bearing on the production and transmission of knowledge, had the effect of suppressing the different denominational perspectives on knowledge in favor of a unified, secular culture which supported the interests of the federal government.

This culture was established in two ways: on the one hand, through the attempt to maintain the neutrality of the university in matters of culture by defining value decisions as a private matter (as Charles Eliot did at Harvard in the late 19th century), and on the other, in the 20th century, through the development, by administrators such as Robert Hutchins at the University of Chicago, of a unified "liberal arts" curriculum designed to integrate all individuals into the values and culture of American citizenship. W. B. Carnochan argues that the current canon debates are simply a continuation of earlier conflicts between "modern" educators, such as Eliot, who advocated a free elective system, and traditionalist opponents,

49. As Hofstadter and Metzger note, early proponents of toleration were merely using the idea as an excuse to advance the interests of a sectarian group that happened to be in the minority. This was the case, for example, with Joseph Noyes at Yale in the 1750s, [see Hofstadter and Metzger, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-1] and with William Livingston, who published in 1753 a series of essays in support of non-sectarian education at King's College, but "seems to have been more concerned with making certain that there should be no college controlled entirely by Anglicans than with insuring that there would be a liberal college controlled without regard to sect." *Ibid.*, p. 187. In any case, Livingston's proposals sought to transfer control of the college from private trustees (a large majority of whom were typically ministers from one denomination) to the state legislature, demonstrating that non-sectarian meant in practice domination by the government. Though Hofstadter and Metzger claim that such early examples of the defense of toleration prepared the way for the later development of academic freedom, these examples seem better suited to showing how the idea of academic freedom has always functioned as a cover for sectarian and political interests.

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such as Matthew Arnold, Irving Babbitt and Robert Hutchins, who developed the great works canon based on Western history and literature.[50]

In reading the history of curriculum battles since the late 19th century as a conflict between the free elective system and the development of a Western civilization curriculum, Carnochan and other defenders of a multiculturalist curriculum attempt to vindicate the idea of knowledge for its own sake as a way of maintaining a neutral stance in questions of culture while still defending the humanities. According to the multiculturalists, this position has the double advantage of preventing education from becoming either a purely vocational undertaking or a kind of propaganda for religious or nationalist interests. The particular attraction of Newman's perspective thus lies in the fact that he, on the one hand, supports the liberal arts against the "servile" vocational arts, but on the other does not make any claims concerning the liberal arts' ability to promote a private or public morality.[51] "In American higher education, the twentieth century has belonged in large part to Arnold's followers, who have grafted onto Eliot's evolutionary model of the university a contrasting model that sanctifies the idea of a harmonious, secure, and politically stable culture. At the same time, Newman's Catholic humanism, though not much reflected in curricular wars, still appeals to skeptics who resist equally the cultural religion of Arnold, on the one hand, and the scientific religion of the research university, on the other."[52] Following Newman, Carnochan can defend the humanities against vocationalism while opposing the ethically based adherence to a Western canon (as advocated by Matthew Arnold and Irving Babbitt) and similar arguments by religious sects for maintaining denominational control over higher education. Since university knowledge is not to be pursued for practical purposes, it can supposedly remain free of such moral imperatives.

But in developing this perspective, Carnochan fails to see how Newman's and Arnold's positions are actually two sides of the same coin of secularization. They in fact functioned together to establish a national culture. The dichotomy between Newman's ideal of knowledge for its own sake and Arnold's moralistic defense of the Western tradition, pursued today as the opposition between multiculturalists and cultural conservatives, is a false one. The establishment of a national, secular culture replacing a prior

50. W. B. Carnochan, *The Battleground of the Curriculum: Liberal Education and American Experience* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 1-21 and 38-50.

51. Newman, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-91.

52. Carnochan, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

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diversity of local, religious cultures was not simply the result of the particular decisions made by American educators to promulgate a Western culture curriculum. Rather, the very idea of knowledge as secular and value-free brings with it a colonizing perspective which seeks to eradicate all other cultures by claiming that they are sectarian and prejudicial rather than neutral and objective. The humanist ideal of supplanting local cultures with a national one is a direct consequence of attempts to separate a knowledge deemed universal from sectarian, particularistic values.

This connection between the idea of universal knowledge and the interests of the nation can be seen in the history of higher education in the US. The rise of the American research university was made possible by increased funding from business and the federal government for higher education which fostered the development of a national, secular culture in the US to the detriment of local and religious cultures. Though there were numerous attempts to establish non-denominational, state universities beforehand, they were unsuccessful until after the war between the states,[53] when the increasing financial role of the federal government and business began to diminish the local and denominational character of higher education by channeling money into institutions which would have otherwise had to turn to private funding from local patrons and religious denominations. The resulting independence of these institutions from local control has been interpreted as the rise of academic freedom, but in practice it translated into an increasing amount of federal government and business influence over educational issues previously retained by localities and religious denominations. This transfer of power was part of the centralizing process carried out by the Northern states during the war between the states. The passage of the Morrill Act, which established the land grant universities to serve economic needs, was only made possible by the secession of the Southern states and the subsequent absence of their unanimous opposition to it based on states' rights arguments. As Brubacher and Rudy note, "opponents of the original Morrill Act had charged that it would only be an entering wedge for a vast extension of federal power. Subsequent events seemed to bear out this prediction."[54] Indeed, one hundred years later the land grants were just one part of a vast system of federal expenditures for higher education, which included both direct and indirect (by way of student loans and grants) subsidies to universities.

53. Hofstadter and Metzger, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-168.

54. Brubacher and Rudy, *op. cit.*, p. 228. For a discussion of the congressional debates surrounding the Morrill Act, see George N. Rainsford, *Congress and Higher Education in the Nineteenth Century* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1972), pp. 85-95.

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Federal funds, which financed 83% of total American research in the natural sciences by the end of WWII,[55] played a large role in shifting the emphasis of higher education away from teaching and toward research. The research emphasis was already crucial to the land grants because they reduced the cultural component of the college curriculum while increasing the emphasis on the utilitarian, vocational aspects of education.[56] Although the Morrill Act was popularized as a means of fostering the education of farmers and tradesmen for their professions, these colleges quickly became centers of research. Vocational training was soon supplemented by graduate education leading to advanced professional degrees. A century after the passage of the Morrill Act, the 68 land-grant institutions, of which all but two (Cornell and M.I.T.) were public, accounted for 20% of the master's degrees and 40% of the doctorates granted in the US.[57]

The transformation of the college into the university altered undergraduate teaching to replace the prescribed general curriculum with the specialized character of graduate education based on the German model. The free elective system established by Charles Eliot at Harvard, for instance, transformed most of the 4 year undergraduate curriculum into elective courses. By allowing students to tailor their education to their individual desires and capacities, this change separated Harvard from religious institutions and their value systems. Instead of inculcating a particular denominational culture in all students, Eliot sought to free students from the constraints of a prescribed curriculum in order to promote individual creation and achievement. The moral and denominational aspect was declared out of bounds for college education, and individual students were left to themselves to choose whatever religion they wished to practice and whatever courses they wished to take.[58]

By ensuring that the new colleges would not provide any explicit form of cultural education, Eliot established an idea of education at Harvard in which knowledge would be considered value-free. The goal was to maintain a neutral stance regarding culture, but the result was an

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55. Brubacher and Rudy, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-231.

56. The Morrill Act only provides support to colleges where the "leading object shall be . . . to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts." Morrill Act, 1862, as reprinted in *American Higher Education: A Documentary History*, ed. by Richard Hofstadter and Wilson Smith, Vol. II (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 568.

57. Rainsford, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-97.

58. Brubacher and Rudy, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-116 and Samuel Eliot Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard: 1636-1936* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936) pp. 323-364.

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institutionalization of a particular concept of knowledge which emphasized secularization, specialization and research to the detriment of general education within a denominational context. This departure marked a fundamental change in the American understanding, not just of the purpose of higher education but also of the very structure of knowledge.

The idea of the humanities developed as a consequence of the apparent lack of cultural education at secularized colleges such as Eliot's Harvard. College teachers and administrators began to feel that the cultural transmission previously provided by the denominational context should continue, but without religious overtones in a non-denominational college. In order to take control of this cultural transmission, educators assembled a secular canon based on the idea of an education in the "humanities."[59] The content of the humanities made explicit the notion of culture already implicit in the way the modern university structured knowledge as fragmented into separate disciplines, each of which was putatively making steady progress toward an objective, universal, and secular truth. Almost as soon as the older religious attempts at integrating knowledge into a metaphysical framework was displaced by value-neutrality, a new humanist basis for integrating a college education into a unified, secular perspective replaced the denominational frameworks.

This national culture was defended with the idea that an education in the classics of the Western tradition functions to create the basis for democracy and responsible citizenship, if not for civilization itself. As Carnochan shows, the Western civilization curriculum has its roots in the late 19th century "Civics" movement, which attempted to promulgate a patriotic, nationalist ideology through high school "Civics" textbooks. By the beginning of the 20th century, there was a similar movement at secularized colleges and universities to establish a general curriculum no longer based on the teaching of a religious denomination but rather on a new "canon" of secular culture. But though the "Civics" movement provided the rationale and content for the first Western Civilization curricula, often conceived, as at Stanford and Dartmouth, as "Problems of Citizenship" courses,[60] this curriculum could not have gained ground if the land grants and the free elective system had not paved the way by eliminating the religious denominations which previously defined culture at colleges. Moreover, both the humanities disciplines and the Western civilization curriculum languished in the period between the wars, when the creation

59. Reuben, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-17.
60. Carnochan, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-79.

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of the idea of national unity was no longer a political imperative, only to return with the onset of the Cold War and the perceived need for a national consensus. "In both its remote and immediate origins, Western civ' was a war baby. The first such course was instituted at Columbia immediately after WWI, as a continuation of the war issues' course offered during hostilities. It defined the traditions of the West as those for which the Allies had fought against the Hun. The course had few imitators between the wars, but after WWII it became the most widely taught history course on American campuses."[61] As Peter Novick shows, the length and nature of the Cold War was the true guarantor of the success of the humanities in establishing themselves as disciplines at the university whose claims to objectivity were ultimately based on an enforced ideological conformity to national interests in the Cold War.[62]

Because history and literature have only been able to establish themselves as disciplines to the extent that their work was seen as useful for creating a national culture, the 20th century rise of the humanities in the US has necessarily coincided with the spread of the idea of universal knowledge and the increasing influence of the federal government as the guarantor of the consensus needed to legitimate the idea of universality.

Weber and the Critique of Universal Knowledge

Although the idea of universal knowledge exemplified in Newman's work was indispensable for justifying the replacement in late 19th century America of denominational conformity with the principle of disciplinary autonomy, this theory of knowledge begins to be challenged, at least in Germany, by the turn of the 20th century. Part of the reason for this is the rapidity with which such a theory of knowledge, once institutionalized, revealed its statist character, thus triggering anti-statist critiques. Since Germany was the site of the first research universities, this conflict had already devceloped there by the 1870s, when Nietzsche delivered his scathing critique of the university.[63] It was not until the early 20th century, however, that this critique gained enough currency to begin to dislodge the

61. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 312.

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 302-360.

63. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Über die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten: Sechs öffentliche Vorträge," *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden*, ed. by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1967-77), Vol. 1, pp. 641-752. For a discussion of Nietzsche's critique of the university, see Valerie Allen and Ares Axiotis, "Nietzche and the Future of Education," in this issue of *Telos*.

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idea of universal knowledge even among academics such as Max Weber.

Like Newman, Weber insists on separating facts from values to refute claims by scientists that their research could lead to any conclusions about values. For this reason, he is adamantly opposed to the idea of professors "pleading" for particular political or moral attitudes in the lecture room. Science cannot make any statements which give an evaluation of a particular end or set of values (as embodied for instance in a religion or a political party). For Weber, it can only evaluate the efficacy of a particular means for arriving at a predetermined end and predict some consequences of the pursuit of a specific end.[64] As with Newman, the separation of facts from values serves to limit the scientist's right to espouse certain values or goals as if they had "scientific" justification. Any particular value position taken by a professor could not be based on objective scientific facts, but only on personal and scientifically undemonstrable opinions.[65]

However, contrary to Newman, Weber also notes that knowledge cannot exist without a prior set of values which determines the questions and problems to be investigated: "in social sciences the stimulus to the posing of scientific problems is in actuality always given by practical 'questions.' Hence the very recognition of the existence of a scientific problem coincides, personally, with the possession of specifically oriented motives and values."[66] According to Weber, the total separation of factual knowledge from values, which Newman defends as a possibility in the secular tradition, never actually exists. By assuming it is possible to pursue knowledge for its own sake, this separation only obscures the role of values in creating knowledge. For knowledge could not even come into existence were it not for the practical and moral concerns which guide all human effort. Which interests to pursue in research and which questions to ask in teaching will always be determined by such "extraneous" considerations, because without them there would be no knowledge. The most basic facts can only come into being within a practical context. As Weber outlines: "Only a small portion of existing concrete reality is colored by our value-conditioned interest and it alone is significant to us. It is significant because it reveals relationships which are important to us due to their connection with our values. Only because and to the extent that this is the case is it worth-

64. Max Weber, "The Meaning of 'Ethical Neutrality' in Sociology and Economics" in *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, tr. and ed. by Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1949), pp. 18, 21.

65. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-5.

66. Weber, "'Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy," in *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

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while for us to know it in its individual features. We cannot discover, however, what is meaningful to us by means of a 'presuppositionless' investigation of empirical data. Rather perception of its meaningfulness to us is the presupposition of its becoming an object of investigation."[67]

The structure of knowledge described by Weber leads to the conclusion that the separation of disciplines is not determined by the nature of the universe, as Newman claims, but rather by a differentiation of problems facing communities. "It is not the 'actual' interconnections of 'things' but the conceptual interconnections of problems which define the scope of the various sciences. A new 'science' emerges where new problems are pursued by new methods and truths are thereby discovered which open up significant new points of view."[68] A complete picture of the universe could not be created by adding together all the separate disciplines because each discipline is not organized as a section of a total whole but as a tool for solving particular problems. The facts discovered in the pursuit of knowledge are strictly determined by the particular tools employed. Events which cannot be dealt with by using these tools are simply dismissed. No matter how many different disciplines were to be added to the "store" of knowledge, a human perspective could never even approach a complete view of the universe because knowledge is not organized as a mirror of reality but as a collection of particular solutions to a limited set of problems. Given this understanding of knowledge, to ask of the university that it provide a complete picture of the universe makes no more sense than to ask such a thing of a carpenter's toolbox.[69]

The unity of a discipline is not based on its ability to provide an objective truth, but on a pre-established consensus about the goals of research. This consensus cannot be constructed from within the discipline but must necessarily come from outside. In technical disciplines, the outside interest will be determined largely by economic interests, either directly or mediated by the state. In issues of culture, because a discipline is organized to transcend local discourse by creating a national one, the

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67. *Ibid.*, pp. 76-7. Later on in this essay, he writes: "For none of those systems of ideas, which are absolutely indispensable in the understanding of those segments of reality which are meaningful at a particular moment, can exhaust its infinite richness. They are all attempts, on the basis of the present state of our knowledge and the available conceptual patterns, to bring order into the chaos of those facts which we have drawn into the field circumscribed by our interest." *Ibid.*, p. 105.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

69. For a discussion of science as a tool, see Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 35-42.

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goals of a discipline will be set by the cultural needs of the nation. In all of these cases, the unity and claim to objectivity of a particular discipline will depend on the value consensus which determines the goals of research. Once this consensus breaks down, the discipline itself will be unable to maintain its autonomy and cohesion.

In spite of his insights into the relation between knowledge and values, Weber's support of the state monopoly on education in Germany led him to retain a notion of value-free science whose effect was to buttress national culture. By the time he was writing, the outside ideological consensus on culture which could guarantee the unity of the social sciences had already broken down at German universities. In the face of an impending fragmentation of the disciplines, he defends value-free science in order to silence alternative value systems and thereby re-establish a putative, if not a genuine, consensus. Describing the situation in 1917, he writes: "Forty years ago there existed among the scholars working in our discipline, the widespread belief that of the various possible points of view in the domain of practical-political preferences, ultimately only one was the correct one. (Schmoller himself to be sure took this position only to a limited extent.) Today this is no longer the case among the proponents of the assertion of professorial evaluations — as may easily be demonstrated. The legitimacy of the assertion of professorial evaluations is no longer defended in the name of an ethical imperative whose comparatively simple postulate of justice, both in its ultimate foundations as well as in its consequences, partly was, and partly seemed to be, relatively unambiguous and above all relatively impersonal (due to its specifically suprapersonal character). Rather, as the result of an inevitable development, it is now done in the name of a patchwork of cultural values, i.e., actually subjective demands on culture, or quite openly, in the name of the alleged 'rights of the teacher's personality.' One may well wax indignant over this, but one cannot — because it is a value-judgment — refute this point of view. Of all types of prophecy, this 'personally' tinted professorial type of prophecy is the only one which is altogether repugnant. An unprecedented situation exists when a large number of officially accredited prophets do not do their preaching on the streets, or in churches or other public places or in sectarian conventicles, but rather feel themselves competent to enunciate their evaluations on ultimate questions 'in the name of science' in governmentally privileged lecture halls in which they are neither controlled, checked by discussion, nor subject to contradiction."[70] Whereas the implied unity

70. Weber, "Ethical Neutrality," *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

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of values of an earlier era justified value-judgments as a means of maintaining an ethical order, the proliferation of value perspectives leads, according to Weber, to a situation in which the espousal of values is no longer legitimate. Because values cannot be determined rationally, the defense of a particular set of values over others will always be arbitrary. Weber then concludes that, within a context of competing systems of values, professors must remain silent about their value-judgments because any pronouncements for or against particular values would be scientifically unjustified and could only be made based on personal preferences.

Weber objects to the espousal of values only in a situation of competing value-systems and realizes that a pre-existing consensus would make such a prohibition on value-judgments superfluous — a common set of values would in any case suffuse the entire discourse at the university and there would be no point in objecting. But in making this distinction between two historical situations, Weber assumes that the proliferation of value systems was "an inevitable development" of the advance of knowledge whereas it was itself a consequence of the attempt to create secular knowledge — i.e. a knowledge divorced from values. Since knowledge is always based on a presupposed value system, secularization cannot emancipate knowledge from prejudices. Instead, the elimination of a single totalizing system of values from the constitution of knowledge creates the plurality of competing value systems Weber describes.[71] By assuming the inevitability of this new situation, Weber in effect affirms it.

Weber does this because such a situation allows him to suggest individual preference as the sole criterium for choosing one value system over another: "The fruit of the tree of knowledge, which is distasteful to the complacent but which is, nonetheless, inescapable, consists in the insight that every single important activity and ultimately life as a whole, if it is not to be permitted to run on as an event in nature but is instead to be consciously guided, is a series of ultimate decisions through which the soul — as in Plato — chooses its own fate, i.e., the meaning of its activity and existence."[72] By depicting the question of values as inevitably an issue of conflict between various perspectives, Weber is led to the conclusion that values may in the end be determined by individual choices rather than by adherence to a received tradition. This conclusion leads him to esteem individual choice above all other values. Academic freedom,

71. The plurality he discusses was actually the result of the increasing presence of socialists and anarchists who opposed the policies of the national state.

72. Weber, "Ethical Neutrality," *op. cit.*, p. 18.

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which previously did not even exist as a concept,[73] now becomes the highest value in a secular situation of supposed value-neutrality.

Weber defends academic freedom with the argument that researchers are incompetent to make any value decisions based on science: "The favourite argument that the state — which means, it should be noted, the political group dominant at the moment — cannot agree to allow the universities to propagate doctrines which are inimical to the state contains a fundamental error which, it cannot be denied, is also made in academic circles about the meaning and nature of university teaching in general. . . . Universities do not have it as their task to teach any outlook or standpoint which is either 'hostile to the state' or 'friendly to the state.' They are not institutions for the inculcation of absolute or ultimate moral values. They analyse facts, their conditions, laws and interrelations; they analyse concepts, their logical presuppositions and content. They do not and they cannot teach what should happen — since this is a matter of ultimate personal values and beliefs, of a fundamental outlook, which cannot be demonstrated like a scientific proposition."[74] In order to justify the necessity of academic freedom, Weber points out that values cannot be demonstrated scientifically and that science therefore should not be involved in inculcating moral values. As Robert Proctor explains concerning this line of argument: "Value-neutrality represents a critique of scientism — a desire to preserve a realm of values untouched by the authority of technical expertise. Science must be value-free to guarantee that values will remain science-free."[75] Weber's separation of facts from values opposes the notion, shared by both scientism and Newman's defense of theology, that moral imperatives are to be found in reality itself, as part of the fabric of the universe. If values are not to be found in nature but must be imposed by human will, as Weber argues, then science is unable to determine values and a scientist has no special authority to make moral judgments about religion or politics. Weber's distinction between facts, which are determined by nature, and values, which are products of the human will, serves to limit both the authority of science to make pronouncements concerning values and the authority of

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73. See, e.g., Hofstadter's and Metzger's description of the resignation of Henry Dunster from the presidency of Harvard in 1654. Hofstadter and Metzger, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-1.

74. Max Weber, "The Academic Freedom of the Universities," *Max Weber on Universities: The Power of the State and the Dignity of the Academic Calling in Imperial Germany*, tr. and ed. by Edward Shils (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1973), pp. 20-21.

75. Robert N. Proctor, *Value-free Science?: Purity and Power in Modern Knowledge* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 149.

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religion to arrive at factual knowledge based on moral imperatives.

This distinction between facts and values, however, only provides a qualified defense of academic freedom. Given a presupposed set of values, science can arrive at conclusions about nature which are objective, even though they are not neutral, keeping in mind, as Proctor points out, that "neutrality and objectivity are not the same thing. Neutrality refers to whether science takes a stand; objectivity, to whether a science merits certain claims to reliability. The two need not have anything to do with each other. Certain sciences may be completely 'objective' — that is valid — and yet designed to serve certain political interests. Geologists know more about oil-bearing shales than about many other rocks, but the knowledge is thereby no less reliable."[76] Given a particular value framework, the idea of academic freedom can be useful in preventing unpleasant facts from being suppressed. Taking Alvin Gouldner's example of the doctor who sides with the patient rather than the virus, academic freedom would be akin to allowing the doctor to give a bad prognosis, even though such a prognosis is not something the patient would like to hear. The doctor's freedom does not extend, however, to choosing ultimate values, e.g., deciding to take the side of the virus against the patient.

Similarly, academic freedom cannot be used to defend the researcher's right to choose the goals of research. If science is not qualified to make value-judgments, then researchers also cannot make any decisions about the goals of research. This does not mean, however, that a religious denomination, or whatever institution controls the university, cannot make such decisions based on its own goals and values. On the contrary, if science cannot decide values, then these decisions must of necessity come from a non-scientific perspective. To the extent that a religious denomination does not make such decisions, they will simply be taken over by some other outside entity like the government. Weber, however, presumes that the impossibility of a scientific determination of values is an argument for maintaining value pluralism at the university. By guaranteeing that the individual may choose his or her own values, such pluralism assumes that the construction of values, because it is not rational and universal, must be completely relativistic and dependent on individual choice. Believing that he has made a rational argument in support of academic freedom in determining values based on the idea of value-neutrality, Weber feels justified in treating this type of academic "value-freedom" not as a prejudice but as a logical precondition for the pursuit of

76. *Ibid.* p. 10.

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knowledge. In doing so, he assumes that a plurality of value systems is necessary at the university because it allows students to make comparisons and come to an informed decision about values.

When individual choice in the determination of values becomes the highest value at the university and compulsion becomes the worst evil, all value perspectives, according to Weber, will be given equal opportunity. But this can only be important if one assumes that values are a matter which can be rationally decided. This is not the case, even according to Weber himself. Since knowledge can only be pursued within a previously imposed value system, the important question is which value system will determine the pursuit of knowledge. This decision cannot be made individually because it is never really a decision but a presupposition. An affirmation of choice itself "implicitly denies the existence of a pre-existing horizon of significance, whereby some things are worthwhile and others less so, and still others not at all, quite anterior to choice."[77] Value pluralism denies the fact that values are always collective constructions, grounded in both a spatial context of family and community relations and a temporal context of intergenerational ties. Weber's defense of academic freedom concerning values assumes that it is possible to determine values decisionistically when in fact, as Taylor and Tate point out, every individual decision will always presuppose a "horizon of significance" — a tradition into which the individual has already been socialized.

The dream of academic value-freedom is based on the belief that it can establish and defend a university community from encroachment by an outside particularistic community which seeks to determine ultimate values. This dream gains legitimacy by blurring the distinction between facts and values upon which it is based. For though academic freedom to arrive at factual knowledge within the framework of a particular value orientation is legitimate as a defense of impartiality against prejudice, academic freedom to determine values is entirely another matter. Though both the university and the outside community would be served by maintaining impartiality in determining facts, there is no such thing as impartiality in determining values. Knowledge will always be dependent on an outside context for its values, and when the idea of academic freedom is invoked to allow researchers to decide values, the effect is not to maintain impartiality but to defend one set of values against another.

Since individual choice in determining values is itself a rationally

77. Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 37-38. Quoted in Tate, *op. cit.*, p. 21, n. 47.

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unjustifiable value, its institutionalization is at least as arbitrarily exclusionary as the subordination of knowledge to a particular religious doctrine. Weber's defense of academic freedom concerns not only facts but also values and consequently depends on beliefs which precede the individual choice he would like to establish as the final arbiter of values. He refuses to accept this, however, and insists that value pluralism is all-inclusive, pointing out that he defends the rights of socialists and anarchists to teach at state-controlled institutions. He only rejects a "Dutch" model of dealing with academic freedom in which particular denominational or party interests are given the right to found, fund, and control their own non-state universities in which a particular perspective would be enforced.[78] But this rejection of denominational education shows that the idea of academic value-freedom encourages the banishment of particular perspectives from the university because of their perceived intolerance. The condition for being allowed to teach or to provide money to open a university is the toleration of other value systems in the constitution of knowledge. Yet such a toleration necessitates the dismantling of all totalizing perspectives on knowledge which do not recognize individual freedom of choice as the highest value. This would exclude from the university every specific religious community which operates according to certain shared traditions that will automatically limit the individual's right to choose values. All value systems other than those based on individiual choice become marginalized in the constitution of knowledge.

The ultimate effect of establishing individual choice as the highest value, however, is to ensconce the nation-state as the implicit metaphysical referent of all knowledge. This means first of all that religious denominations must be supplanted by the state as the founder and financer of universities. By Weber's times, this had already been accomplished in Germany, and he sought to maintain the state monopoly on education to insure that value-neutrality dominated all university endeavor. Yet he also saw the danger that the state would use its power to suppress viewpoints opposing its interests. He supported the state only insofar as he considered it a neutral party funding the university without influencing the teachers' value-judgments, and his defense of academic freedom was directed primarily against state intervention in university affairs. But since his insistence on academic freedom was based on the assumption that the state must remain in control of funding for higher education, though he disputed

78. Weber, "Ethical Neutrality," *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7; and "Academic Freedom," *op. cit.*, p. 22.

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the state's right to intervene in determining the results of research, he agreed that all university research should serve the interests of the state.[79]

As Weber pointed out concerning the role of values in constituting cultural knowledge, a particular value framework is always implicit within any research project. The crucial issue is who will determine this framework. For Weber, the choice is between the state as embodied in "the political group dominant at the moment," an alternative political group, a religious community, or researchers themselves. By supporting academic freedom as the highest value, Weber attempted to counter state power by defending the right of researchers to come to their own conclusions about the values to be used in guiding their research. "Just as without the investigator's conviction regarding the significance of particular cultural facts, every attempt to analyze concrete reality is absolutely meaningless, so the direction of his personal belief, the refraction of values in the prism of his mind, gives direction to his work. And the values to which the scientific genius relates the object of his inquiry may determine, i.e., decide the 'conception' of the whole epoch, not only concerning what is regarded as 'valuable' but also concerning what is significant or insignificant, 'important' or 'unimportant' in the phenomena."[80] Though he realized that research can never be conducted independently of a particular set of values, it is not society which is to determine these values for science. Rather, Weber delegated to the "scientific genius" the task of deciding values for "the whole epoch," since this sovereignty over the direction of research inevitably confers sovereignty over the system of values which defines the university.

But if it is impossible for a researcher to decide values scientifically, what determines the "direction of his belief, the refraction of values in the prism of his mind" in Weber's vision of the university? Here Weber's answer makes explicit the implications of Newman's initial separation of secular from sacred knowledge. The final effect of Weber's attempt to create an immanent ethics is simply to obscure the organizing national context within which research in a discipline gains meaning. Though a researcher might decide to pursue a particular project because of his or her passion for the subject matter, control over funding will inevitably give the state the power to determine which projects are supported and which abandoned, which disciplines will grow and which will wither. Though

79. Proctor shows that in Weber's own research "the ultimate value-standard for economic inquiry must be *Staatsraison* — the interests of the state." See Proctor, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

80. Weber, "Objectivity," *op. cit.*, p. 82.

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Weber's notion of academic freedom is designed to create a university value system in which "research communities" are free to choose their own directions according to the intellectual spirit of the age, the practical consequence is that local religious communities lose power to national, public interest and, in the case of the US, to business interests in determining the structure and goals of higher education. The primary reason for this is that research communities are in fact incapable of constructing values, and the researchers by default end up falling back on values derived from elsewhere. Once religious determination of values is suppressed, higher education, both in its technical and its cultural aspects, becomes an instrument whose goals have become manipulable by the national state.

The 20th century history of the university is the story of how the various disciplines have sought to professionalize themselves by establishing their own research communities. Since the fundamental determination of the directions of research for all fields is left up to researchers, the individual disciplines rather than any outside communities set the agendas for work done at the university, eliminating all religious perspectives on knowledge. While religious doctrines can only maintain themselves on the basis of a supporting community, the ideal of individual choice undermines this community check on the pursuit of knowledge by lifting people out of the community contexts into which they were born and treating them as individual agents which can now be easily manipulated according to economic and political ends. Claiming to constitute a set of "research communities" centered in the various disciplines which make their own decisions about the values which will guide research, the idea of academic freedom functions to disempower any outside community which is not the state from determining the goals of research.

The Ideal of Objectivity and Professionalization

This increasing orientation of knowledge to the public sphere is a result not only of political and business control of funding but of the very structure of knowledge when organized into academic disciplines. By replacing the moral imperatives in education which had previously dominated the antebellum colleges, the late 19th century ideal of objectivity served as a means for lending professional status to the academic disciplines which would free professors from local community control. Not only the biological and social sciences but also the liberal arts sought to define themselves as separate disciplines, each seeking to establish "professional" status through the claim that each was making steady progress

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toward a unitary and objective truth. The key proposition in this claim to objective truth was the separation of knowledge from values. Historians, for instance, embraced a scientific method according to which their work "must be rigidly factual and empirical, shunning hypothesis; the scientific venture was scrupulously neutral on larger questions of end and meaning; and, if systematically pursued, it might ultimately produce a comprehensive, 'definitive' history."[81] As opposed to an older generation of "amateur" historians, who saw their work as broadly based and more closely allied with literature and moral philosophy than science, these scientific historians concentrated on expanding factual knowledge, each in a specialized sub-field, in order to attain the final truth of history.

Similar endeavors transformed the structure of higher education by dividing knowledge into separate disciplines and then sub-fields within disciplines, creating specialization and professionalization along disciplinary lines. As Novick notes, this reconceptualization of the goals of knowledge "had enormous professional advantages."[82] Specialization and the avoidance of moral issues decreased the chance of confrontation and controversy, thereby creating the semblance of objectivity and intellectual progress which guaranteed the expert status of university researchers. This new status provided an increasingly effective insulation for researchers and the university from outside pressures. "The professional's livelihood was held to depend not upon satisfying any particular client, but rather was a consequence of upholding universalistic professional standards which the laity as a whole would honor." Professionalization and the idea of objectivity "were intimately linked, each process reinforcing the other."[83]

This link between professionalization and objectivity does not suggest that academics were insincere, but rather that forces outside the academy conspired to reward those researchers who adhered to the model of objectivity and value-free science. Those who did not share these ideals became increasingly marginalized in the old-time colleges, while the new breed of professional researcher was being promoted into the university positions which steadily gained in prestige and authority. Likewise, though researchers were not necessarily nationalist, professionalization had the long-term effect of transforming higher education from a local to a national enterprise. This occurred, first, as a consequence of disciplinary autonomy, which, as Thomas Bender describes, was "able to achieve

81. Novick, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 511. See also Reuben, *op. cit.*, pp. 209-210.

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hegemony by discrediting an alternative pattern of science based upon different assumptions about the nature of reality and rooted in civic, as opposed to disciplinary, institutions."[84] Once knowledge was organized along national, disciplinary rather than local, denominational lines: "disciplinary peers, not a diverse urban public, became the only legitimate evaluators of intellectual work. If the civic institution pattern of intellectual life had woven together the various threads of intellectual life, the fabric of urban public culture was riven by the end of the nineteenth century. Knowledge and competence increasingly developed out of the internal dynamics of esoteric disciplines rather than within the context of shared perceptions of public needs."[85]

Bender is typical in describing the transformation as a transferring of the foundations of knowledge from a civic community to a "research community." But research communities are in fact not independent social groups; they are only unified by the particular goals to which the various disciplines are subordinated. The idea of the research community as the foundation of objective truth is the most recent attempt to justify the separation and autonomy of the various disciplines in the social sciences and the humanities.[86] Using this idea to establish a basis for consensus, researchers, though no longer able to maintain the absolute and objective truth of their results, can still maintain a provisional validity based on the intersubjective confirmation of a research community.

The necessary agreement about basic values for the constitution of a research community must come from the outside, as something determined beforehand. "No community can be satisfied that its discourse is objective

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84. Thomas Bender, *Intellect and Public Life: Essays on the Social history of Academic Intellectuals in the United States* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 5.

85. *Ibid.*, p. 10. George Marsden describes how disciplinary autonomy still determines the structure of higher education today: "The more universities promote technical skill, the more they fragment into sub-disciplines. Such tendencies are reinforced by the ongoing impetus of professionalism. For faculty, loyalty to one's profession overwhelms any loyalty to one's current institution." George Marsden, "Introduction," in *The Secularization of the Academy*, ed. by George M. Marsden and Bradley J. Longfield (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 32. Similarly, Charles Sykes demonstrates in *ProfScam* how the autonomy of the disciplines has removed the possibility of local college control over education, placing curriculum decisions in professional organizations such as the Modern Language Association, which are organized by discipline. Charles Sykes, *ProfScam: Professors and the Demise of Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1988), pp. 20-25.

86. On the contemporary dominance of the idea of the "research community" as the foundation of objective truth, see Novick, *op. cit.*, p. 570.

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— or even know what it would mean to be objective — without substantial agreement on values, goals, and perceptions of reality. All of the factors so far considered could not, in combination, have established objectivity as the accepted norm within the American historical community at the end of the nineteenth century were it not for one additional factor: the extraordinary degree of ideological homogeneity within that community."[87] This homogeneity in turn was not based on values internal to the discipline but external economic and political imperatives. The professionalization of the disciplines in the US has only succeeded to the extent that the researchers' goals have coincided with those of businesses and the federal government. In the natural sciences, industrial applications have been the motor behind university expansion, industrial interests transforming the landscape of higher education in the 19th century through the unprecedented gifts to found universities such as Stanford, Cornell, Johns Hopkins, and the University of Chicago.[88] As Novick has shown in relation to history as a discipline, in the humanities the emphasis on scientific objectivity and an accompanying professionalization of the discipline has only occurred when the federal government saw history as useful for its goals: developing a sense of American identity in new immigrants at the end of the 19th century, creating anti-German propaganda during WWI,[89] and supporting Cold War ideology after WWII. In those periods when the discipline of history had no such usefulness for the state — prior to the war between the states and from the 1920s to the 1940s — history as a professional discipline either did not exist (the American Historical Association, for instance, was not founded until 1884) or languished.[90]

The Contemporary Fragmentation of Disciplinary Unity

Left to its own, a university characterized by value pluralism will fragment into a chaotic group of competing perspectives with little to say to each other. As can be seen from both Weber's remarks and the history

87. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

88. Hofstadter and Metzger, *op. cit.*, pp. 413-416.

89. With regard to this WWI propaganda effort, Novick notes: "This experience is rich in lessons about what a weak reed "professionalism" is in checking excesses. In fulfilling their propaganda tasks, wartime historians were almost always scrupulous about maintaining formal norms of scholarship. . . . . But viewing the venture in the large, the participants could not escape the realization that one could quite easily be flagrantly propagandistic without violating norms of scholarship narrowly conceived. A project which failed to make the requisite point could be abandoned or modified." Novick, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

90. On the "stalling" of professionalization in the inter-war period, see Novick, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-205.

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of the university, such chaos has been kept under control by outside government pressure, which has nurtured ideological conformity with a nationalist agenda. But as pressure for the maintenance of this stance erodes externally, the internal cohesion of the university and of the individual disciplines themselves begins to disintegrate. As Russell Berman notes with regard to the most recent turn in this development: "If the natural sciences have been nourished by the Pentagon and the defense establishment, if the social sciences have been part of a welfare-state agenda, and the humanities a cultural armament on both fronts — Western culture as the culture of NATO abroad and democracy at home — then the internal identity of the university's disciplines is about to become as obsolete as the Berlin Wall."[91] The end of the Cold War has already resulted in a substantial reduction in government funding for the research tasks of the university have been the foundation for disciplinary autonomy and specialization. This autonomy and the consequent semblance of objectivity depend on the ability of a discipline to maintain a consensus about basic values which is in line with the outside interests guaranteeing funding and prestige. Once this consensus breaks down outside the university, it will inevitably break down within the disciplines, destroying the unity upon which they depend for their survival.

While the state still maintains cultural hegemony in countries such as Germany and France, there are signs that a national consensus is breaking down in the US, especially within the humanities, where the multiculturalist Left has been arguing for more than two decades that the liberal arts curriculum of the Cold War period institutionalized a particular nationalist culture in place of a diversity of specific ones. Contrary to all expectations, the Left's long march through the institutions of higher education may yet succeed in subverting them and bringing about their downfall, notwithstanding the fact that this downfall also means the self-destruction of the academic Left. The growing influence of multiculturalism and the religious Right has already eroded the old Cold War consensus based on "Western civilization" and "great books," which had unified the goals of researchers in the humanities. Moreover, the rise of cultural studies and various critiques of scientific rationality in almost all humanities and social science departments is beginning to blur the methodological differences that separated the disciplines from each other. "If a jaundiced view of the ersatz foundationalism provided by invoking the Western liberal 'conversation that is us' came from the left, as analagous [sic] skepticism

91. Russell Berman, "Perestroika for the University!," in *Telos* 81 (Fall 1989), p. 121.

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came from dissidents in the Soviet bloc, there was nothing ideological about the perception that 'communities of the competent' were not, in fact, steadily marching toward convergent truth. Hard as one might try, it was impossible to locate that emerging Peircean scholarly consensus which was to sustain objectivity in place of old-style foundationalism. In virtually every disciplinary realm, very much including the historical, one found either factional polarization, or fragmented chaos which made factionalism seem, by comparison, like a kind of order."[92] "As a broad community of scholars united by common aims, common standards, and common purposes, the discipline of history had ceased to exist."[93]

Each faction in the current culture wars debate — Cold War cultural conservatives and multiculturalists — is attempting to create a national consensus based either on Arnold's vision of the progress of Western civilization or on a multiculturalist, interest-group ethic in the case of the latter. But while the end of the war between the states has rendered the first vision unnecessary, the multiculturalist ethic also has limited chances for survival as a national ideology because it is already based on pluralism. Yet the disintegration of a national culture may not result in the cultural barbarism that conservatives in the tradition of Matthew Arnold fear. The end of a secular, national culture may provide the opportunity for the re-emergence of a civic culture based in local and denominational interests. Given the impossibility of combining the various perspectives now current at the university into a single unified culture, the system of denominational colleges in the US prior to the war between the states provides perhaps the best available model for the future. Proponents of denominational education have already drawn this conclusion, George Marsden, for example, calling on "serious Christians to concentrate on building distinctly Christian institutions that will provide alternatives to secular colleges and universities."[94]

92. Novick, *op. cit.*, p. 572.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 628.
94. George Marsden, "The Soul of the American University: An Historical Overview," in *The Secularization of the Academy*, ed. by George Marsden and Bradley J. Longfield (New York: Oxford University Press), p. 41. For other recent elaborations of this perspective on higher education, see *Opening the American Mind: The Integration of Biblical Truth in the Curriculum of the University*, ed. by W. David Beck (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1991); Mark R. Schwehn, *Exiles from Eden: Religion and the Academic Vocation in America* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Merrimon Cuninggim, *Uneasy Partners: The College and the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994); George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); and Douglas Sloan, *Faith and Knowledge: Mainline Protestantism and American Higher Education* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994).

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If the denominational college re-emerges in importance, teaching and research may also begin to separate. In the antebellum college, research had no role. "For over a century and a half American collegiate education relied chiefly on young tutors, having in all its faculties only a handful of professors of some maturity and length of tenure."[95] According to the MLA, this situation is rapidly returning but in a way which has created a widening gap between the part-timers, who do much of the teaching but receive little remuneration or job security, and the tenured professors, who are paid to do research. "In 1970, 22% of the faculty nationwide consisted of part-timers, but by 1993 the face of higher education had changed so drastically that part-timers constituted 40% of the faculty."[96] The rapid increase is a consequence of a situation in which "the dual imperatives of access and research potentially propel a distinction between, on the one hand, knowledge work based on intellectual capacities uniquely vested in individuals and, on the other, undergraduate teaching perceived as routine service work seeking to transmit and develop 'basic skills'."[97] But this unfortunate division of faculty into tenured professors and part-timers would cease to exist if research in the humanities were to be completely taken out of the college and the Ph.D. were no longer required for teaching. This is already the case at most two-year institutions and may be the most viable model for four-year colleges as well. Such a change would not only eliminate the current two-tiered structure of the faculty, but would return the college to a mission of teaching skills and transmitting culture. At the same time, the creation of culture could once again become a community activity rather than a professional one, the Ph.D. going the way of the Communist Party membership card.

95. Hofstadter and Metzger, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

96. Margaret Cahalan, et al, *Fall Staff in Postsecondary Institutions, 1993* (Washington: GPO, 1996), pp. 24-25. Cited in "Final Report: MLA Committee on Professional Employment," submitted by Sandra M. Gilbert (New York: Modern Language Association, 1997), p. 8.

97. "Final Report: MLA Committee on Professional Employment," *op. cit.*, p. 21.

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Nietzsche on the Future of Education

Valerie Allen and Ares Axiotis

In the winter of 1872, while still a young professor in Basel, having just published his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, Friedrich Nietzsche delivered a series of lectures entitled "On the Future of Our Educational Institutions."[1] These five lectures were well received at the time. It appears that Nietzsche intended to add two more lectures and to publish the whole series as a book. By the end of the year, however, the title of the series featured only as the second title in his self-parodying essay, "Five Forwards to Five Unwritten Books."[2] The lectures remained unpublished during Nietzsche's lifetime and, even after they were finally published, they were summarily dismissed as *juvenilia* in the only English translation of them.[3] Nietzsche's sister, Elizabeth, remarked that they comprised

1. The citations are translated from "Über die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten," ed. by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, *Friedrich Nietzsche: Nachgelassene Schriften 1870-1873*, in *Werke*, Div. 3, Vol. 2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1973). The only translation in English is by J. M. Kennedy in the Oscar Levy edition of *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 18 vols. (1909-11), repr. ed. (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964). Stanford University Press is in the process of translating the complete Colli/Montinari edition. Citations from these lectures will provide the lecture number in parentheses, followed by the page number from the Colli/Montinari text.

2. "Fünf Vorreden zu fünf ungeschriebenen Büchern" in *Werke*, Div. 3, Vol. 2. Derrida discusses the lectures in detail in his 1979 addresses on Nietzsche, "Otobiographies: The Teaching of Nietzsche and the Politics of the Proper Name," tr. by Avital Ronell, in *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation* (New York: Schocken Books, 1985).

3. Kennedy's translation, published before the two world wars, is refreshingly innocent since it does not have to comment on Nietzsche's guilt by association with the educational program of National Socialism. In his skimpy introduction, Kennedy remarks that, given the lectures' early date, "one can scarcely expect to find in them that broad, 'good European' point of view which we meet with in his later works" (p. 7).

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a fine blend of emotion, enthusiasm and malice, but Jacques Derrida calls into question the "signature" of these lectures because Nietzsche himself disparaged them in correspondence subsequent to their delivery, intimating that he had lost his way in them and that they ended in pure negativity.[4] Nevertheless, over the years and more recently in criticisms of the university, one can recognize themes either borrowed from Nietzsche or in line with his own concerns.

Nietzsche's prescience and originality in these lectures lie not only in having predicted the twofold threat to the university by the state and the market (he calls it *Lebensnoth* [IV, 209], the imperative for survival) long before the pathological symptoms had become generally discernible, but more so in his stubborn insistence that these threats are internal to the principle of "reasonableness" itself — that principle upon which the liberal university is based — and thus not the result of external accidents of circumstance engulfing its rational autonomy. In terms of both symptomatic description and diagnostic causality, Nietzsche's lectures cast a long shadow across the writings of later philosophers of education, whose arguments, whether sympathetic or not, have taken his views as points of departure. Thus two critical traditions can be traced in the post-Nietzschean philosophy of education — the tradition which emphasizes the dangers of economic interests vested in the university through the dominance of technical reason (Weber, Heidegger, Jaspers, Lyotard, Bourdieu, and Derrida) and the tradition which has traced the shadowy but sinister presence of the state in academe through administrative reason (from the Frankfurt School to Foucault).

Surprisingly, the debt to Nietzsche's critique of the technical and administrative imperatives latent in Wilhelm von Humboldt's ideal of the liberal university is often ignored and, ironically, Nietzsche often has been caricatured as the advocate of precisely the individualism and statism he was at such pains to criticize.[5] This perceived individualism arises from

4. For his characterization of The Birth of Tragedy as naughty and offensive, see Nietzsche's letter of December 31, 1871, to Gustav Krug; for the popularity of the lectures, his letter of January 28, 1872, to Erwin Rohde. For Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche's observation, see the tenth chapter of her Nietzsche-Wagner correspondence.

5. See Timothy F. Murphy, *Nietzsche as Educator* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984); Gary Lemco, *Nietzsche as Educator* (Mellen Research University Press, 1992). The dominant tendency in America has been to see him in an aesthetic individualist tradition derived from Emerson's idea of "self-reliance." See Arthur C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher* (New York: Macmillan, 1965); Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985); George J. Stack, *Nietzsche and Emerson: An Elective Affinity* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992).

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sweeping interpretations of his recuperation of ancient Greek heroic culture as an antidote to liberal autonomy. Similarly, in the wake of the role played by Germany during the mid-20th century, Nietzsche's interest in the integrity of German culture usually has been castigated as reactionary,[6] even as his sharp criticisms of the "culture-state" have been conveniently ignored

I

The search for guidance for the future, enacted as a revisitation of the past, is at the center of Nietzsche's lectures. As a university professor at Basel, he inquires after the future of the educational institutions by means of recounting a past encounter he experienced as a student at Bonn. Then, within this recursive narrative, Nietzsche relates how, while a student at Bonn, he revisited the secluded site of a pact made between himself and his friend some years before in order that they might meditate upon the course of their own cultural development. This Wordsworthian revisitation of a past scene is wholly Romantic in its anxious awareness of the weight of past and future that hangs within the present moment. Furthermore, Nietzsche suggests that the malaise of the present educational system is made manifest by the way in which contemporary culture reads or misreads the past.[7] One may ask here how much Lyotard's meditations upon postmodernism as the "will have been" of the *futur antérieur*[8] owe to Nietzsche. For Nietzsche's conception of the "future" of education is not a simple future, linear and homogeneous, but an ironic heterogeneous futurity behind the moment of the present.

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6. For interpretations of Nietzsche as a reactionary irrationalist, see Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) and Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

7. See Paul de Man's discussion of the early Nietzsche writing on modernity and history in "Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben" ("On the Use and Misuse of History for Life"). "Modernity and history relate to each other in a curiously contradictory way that goes beyond antithesis or opposition. If history is not to become sheer regression or paralysis, it depends on modernity for its duration and renewal; but modernity cannot assert itself without being at once swallowed up and reintegrated into a regressive historical process. Nietzsche offers no real escape out of a predicament in which we readily recognize the mood of our own modernity. Modernity and history seem condemned to being linked together in a self-destroying union that threatens the survival of both." See *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1983), p. 151.

8. Jean-François Lyotard, "Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?" in I. Hassan and S. Hassan, eds., *Innovation/Renovation* (Wisconsin, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), pp. 71-82.

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Through the metaphor of the university in the eyes of its pupils, Nietzsche gesticulates within the hall of mirrors produced by gazing upon one's self in the reflection cast by another's eye. By drawing out the pun implicit in the metaphor, Derrida, in an address of that title, recollects his own debt to Nietzsche's lectures (p. 18).[9] Nietzsche, a professor, talks about how the university seemed to him when he himself was once a rowdy student furiously practising his pistols, who in turn experiences the profound encounter with the views of an old philosopher, formerly a university professor himself, who is, by now it is clear, the disenchanted Nietzsche himself, an angry young man, old before his time. Inside this vertiginous nesting of identities within identities lies the question of who it is who *is* the university. Although it is the old philosopher who sees into the truth of things, Nietzsche, in a letter to Friedrich Ritschl (January 30, 1872), sees his first duty in these lectures as that of reaching the younger generation of scholars. Despite much talk about Nietzschean education in terms of a genius *Führer*,[10] such moments of possibility he sets before us issue from below, beyond the official structures of leadership and control wielded within the university. This is a far cry from legitimating the "leaders" of institutionalized education.

The metaphor of the ear of the other, as Derrida has emphasized, dominates Nietzsche's lectures, tracing the other in the au/o-tobiographical labyrinth of the self. The ears are those unclosable orifices through which the world passes within; the unstoppable passage of difference is experienced by them. Ears are the organs of education: students are all ears; teachers are lent ears; ignoramuses have long ears.[11] Nietzsche's own voice in these lectures is mute, a mere eavesdropping. Noise and silence shape the whole narrative. Trigger-happy, he and his friend make a racket in the woods with their target practice, angering the elderly philosopher. The clash is not only between youth and old age, but also between the din of a little knowledge and the profounder stillness

9. Jacques Derrida, "The Principle of Reason: The University in the Eyes of its Pupils," *Diacritics*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (1983), pp. 3-20.

10. In *Ear of the Other*, Derrida observes, twice, that the only teaching institution to model itself upon Nietzsche's pedagogic directives was the Nazi one, and he throws up the possibility that such passages in the lectures that appealed to Nazi pedagogy might have been those most repudiated by Nietzsche himself in his own afterthoughts on his addresses (p. 24).

11. Long-eared donkeys listening to a harp is proverbial for a lack of understanding, asses being supposedly deaf to music. See Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, Book I, Prosa 4. As is well known, ears of varying shapes and sizes as well as donkeys are rich *leitmotifs* in Nietzsche's writings.

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of wisdom.[12] Silence, the prerequisite of thought, is of course the one thing the university disallows in its drive to productivity. As Nietzsche points out, this "irresponsible scribbling" is part of the academic program of precociousness. Speaking of secondary education, he identifies the "pantomine" of German composition as one of the formative processes by which talent is systematically eradicated (II, 172). Forced early into overproductivity, all independence carefully doctored, the scholar is left with nothing of mature import to say. Pulled thus untimely from the womb of pregnant silence, we spend the rest of our academic lives incubating in intellectual reactivity. The mark of this splendid precociousness, Nietzsche observes, is the stringy umbilicus that connects the ear to the placenta of the *alma mater* (V, 231); while the ventriloquizing father, coldest of all cold monsters, coldly whispers into the ears that its interests and those of the offsprings are one and the same.[13]

Through the metaphor of the foreign body, Nietzsche provides yet another way in which to think the university as the site of difference. As the word's etymology suggests, the foreign is from outside, yet it cannot logically be from outside until it inhabits that to which it is alien. Doubleness is its given. To think, really think about the university, its being and its future, is at once to subsist in this foreignness of the excluded other, of the un-education that is education; it is to realize the enduring absence of education altogether in these so-called educational institutions, an absence that is not contingent and accidental, a mere privation of antecedently defined perfection, but one whose very non-existence has to be understood in positive terms as a determining negativity belonging to the self-identity of the university, and without which it simply could not be what it is that it is. Nietzsche meditates upon such foreignness in these lectures, at once abjuring the familiar form of the discursive and systematic for the strangeness of the narrative. He himself, a foreigner in Basel, ponders on the "German" university and plains the moribund condition of the university's Germanness. He delineates in the second lecture how the native language, vital and beautiful, is taught, with the greatest of vim to be sure, as if it were already dead, by the "journalists," as he dubs them, who, with their writing laboratories for this and composition programs for that, reduce language to

12. Nietzsche cites the example of Pythagoras' students, who were not supposed to have spoken for five years (I, 30). This is something of a time-honored didactic commonplace. See Aulus Gellius, *Noctium Atticarum*, I, ix; Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalion*, III, iii; John of Salisbury, *Metalogicon*, II, vi.

13. "Vom neuen Götzen" ("On the New Idol"), in *Also sprach Zarathustra* (*Thus Spake Zarathustra*), I.

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inanimate utility. Germanness, Nietzsche says, is already a spectre, a foreign body in the German and German-speaking university, although its ubiquitous caricature persists in the nationalism of the state ideologues like Hegel. Culture is banished the moment the university constructs itself as the arbiter of culture for minds now officially declared open. As metics, students inhabit the schools of their homeland. Thus, to be German, one must degermanize (*entdeutschen*) oneself.[14]

II

It is important to understand Nietzsche's reasons for his disenchantment with the liberal-humanist university. The Friedrich-Wilhelm University of Berlin was founded in 1809. Inspired by Rousseau's *Emile*, this paradigmatic Humboldt model of the university saw education as the practice of freedom through the ideal of rational autonomy.[15] Implicit in the "awakening" of German philosophy from its "dogmatic slumber," as Kant expressed it, was the realization that science, in offering no certainties but only probabilities, had reconciled the philosophy of mind and the political principle of toleration. *Sapere aude*! Certainty belonged to the old regime of intolerance; it was the mark of the narrow mind. The liberal-humanist university finally comes into its own, throwing off the shackles of medieval authoritarianism and intellectual circumscription by religion and faith. Humboldt's university model reconfigures pedagogy to promote individual freedom as the highest goal of culture by deploying three unifying ideals: 1) the unity of knowledge; 2) the unity of teaching and research; and 3) the unity of teacher and student. In his lectures, Nietzsche takes issue with each of these points and concludes with a call for education in a post-Enlightenment culture that has overcome the false authority of rationalism.

The Unity of Knowledge

Classical liberal ideals of education are founded on an optimistic faith in the universality, generality and self-evident "sensibleness" of the rational subject, to whose judgment all questions of truth, beauty and goodness can

14. *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* II *(Human, All Too Human*, II), "Vermischte Meinungen und Sprache" ("Various Opinions and Maxims"), §323. For discussion of the closing and opening of the American mind, see the comments of David Pan in "The Future of Higher Education, — A Conference Report," in this issue of *Telos*.

15. See Wilhelm von Humboldt's programmatic 1810 essay, "Über die innere und äussere Organisation der höheren Wissenschaftlichen Anstalten," in E. Anrich, ed., *Die Idee der deutschen Universität* (Darmstadt, 1959), p. 379. Humboldt draws on the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher, in particular, "Gelegentliche Gedanken über Universitäten im deutschen Sinn," reprinted in Anrich.

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ultimately be referred. All theory and practice are ordered to the principle of reason, which is systematic and totalizing, rendering all things potentially transparent to the rational point of view. Reason is for the Enlightenment what God was to the Middle Ages. Nietzsche is quick to hear the ironic echo in the Enlightenment turn that had sought so strenuously to liberate itself from feudal servitude to dogma, tradition and superstition. His objections to the new cultural regime of reason are fixed on how the liberal ideal of reason demonstrates reasonableness in all matters save one — the question of the authority of reason as the final arbiter of culture. Here reason cannot account for itself and its privileged status but must resort to a rational faith in its transcendent power. The Enlightenment is thus characterized by an intolerance toward irreducible cultural difference and marked by its arrogant refusal to regard itself as anything less than the universal end of all cultural development. According to Nietzsche, insofar as the Enlightenment purports to transcend all historical particularity and contingency, it erases historical difference, forcing a terminal rupture between itself and the classical age of reason: "And the reason why it was impossible to bring the public schools in line with the magnificent plan of classical *paideia* lay in the un-German, almost foreign or cosmopolitan character of these educational endeavors: in the assumption that it was possible to pull the native ground from under one's feet and still stay standing upright." (II, 181).

Nietzsche's attack is directed against Enlightenment hyper-rationality or the (Hegelian) "mad belief in the 'reasonableness of all occurences'" (IV, 217), which has lost all sense of measure and self-control in the lust for cultural power. When such modern rationality — the voice of *imperium* — appears on the horizon as the universal language of all thought, it muzzles the vernacular and standardizes the diversity of dialects into a uniform idiom of abstraction. This "cosmopolitan" rationality cannot acknowledge the local character of its German borders bounded by the partisanship of particular interests. Unlike classical Greek reason, which considered *logos* as much the mastery of good Greek eloquence as the instantiation of reason, Enlightenment reason turns imperial precisely at that point when it turns against itself, thereby repressing its base genealogy in favor of the noble lie of absolute origins. Because classical culture holds the key to the secret of reason's usurpation, the Enlightenment must above all colonize this terrain as the precondition for the legitimacy of any empire at all. Such is the scandal, according to Nietzsche, of modern classical studies, whose uncritical function it is to foster learned ignorance, enabling modern reason to claim descent from the very line all trace of

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which it must obliterate. For Nietzsche, the culmination of this cultural revolution, taking the most outrageous unreason for reason, occurs with Hegel's apotheosis of reason as world-spirit, in the absolute idealism of "thought thinking itself": "A quite recent system basking in scandalous world repute discovered the formula for this self-destruction of philosophy: such a naive unreflectiveness so pervades now as the historical perspective on things, in taking the greatest unreason for 'reason,' and in taking the blackest for white that one is occasionally tempted to ask, in parody of Hegel's dictum: 'is this unreason actual?' Why, it is precisely this unreason which now alone seems to be 'actual' and 'active'?" (V, 234).

The Unity of Teaching and Research

Once again, the liberal ideals of the Humboldt model can be understood in terms of what they were reacting against. In the medieval university, interpretation is not a matter of individual choice but is already given and hermeneutically implicit, ready to become exegetically explicit in the authoritative text of scripture. The medieval university is thus not really a place of research but of instruction, where knowledge is authoritatively expounded and instilled in the student. In contrast, the "enlightened" university celebrates knowledge as an active process of discovery and accumulation, thereby introducing the idea of research alongside that of teaching. The relation between the object of knowledge and the knowing subject is, in the Hegelian sense, already dialectical — a matter of continual description and redescription, of comparing and contrasting oneself to one's predecessors rather than accurately representing an antecedent source of authority. Consequently, knowledge is something inherently procedural and dynamic, instead of being primarily propositional and doctrinal. To come to know and to learn is inevitably to participate in the free process of the production of knowledge itself in the act of research. If knowing is thus always a doing, the "labor of the concept," production rather than representation, being a good student, i.e., being able to listen carefully and question closely, requires exactly the same virtues as research. Conversely, the best teacher is also the best researcher, because both must inevitably be interpreters and, hence, critics of tradition, of those received opinions that make up the stable core of a discipline. In the act of instruction, the moment of exposition is inseparably bound with the moment of criticism, so that any description and explanation always presupposes an evaluative viewpoint from which, among the various features of things, some are gilded and stained with relevance. The rational and the critical principle become

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identical and, in this identification, free thinking subjects become accountable only to themselves as the ultimate standard of judgment.

Once again, Nietzsche now impugns the idea of disembodied critical knowing based on the liberal ideal of open and undistorted dialogue within the protective walls of the academy. If knowing is always radically situated — a "labor of the body," with its intensities of desire, drive and will — then there can be no such thing as disinterested truth. Thus rhetoric and politics cannot be banished from the university but together constitute what must remain unthought and invisible to it for its effective rational operation. In the same way as the spurious "reasonableness" of transcendent rationality always enshrines vested local and particular interests, so, Nietzsche maintains, "academic freedom," the apparent critical autonomy of the process of cognition in the university — that categorical imperative of all academics to act under the idea of freedom alone, impelled only by the force of the better argument — is but a euphemism for the profane determination of judgment by the balance of prevailing interest.

The Unity of the Teacher/Student Relation

The Humboldt model of learning is also dialectical in the Socratic sense in which the social exchange between student and teacher is formalized in the seminar. The monologic exposition of knowledge associated with the medieval university or, at least, with the fixed roles of authoritative *magister* and quizzical *discipulus* gives way to the anti-authoritarian and democratic dialogic encounter, calling everything into question and leaving everything open to interpretation. In the seminar, the roles of teacher and student are not fixed according to status but freely interchangeable as the discussion progresses. By the same token, the text no longer represents the authority of scripture but is simply a given narrative, inherently value-free, ever awaiting interpretation and ever in need of re-interpretation to avoid the text's tendency to enshrine itself as law. In these respects, then, the seminar as envisaged in Humboldtian pedagogy is the secular analogue of the reformed congregation — a community of free-thinkers without priest or creed to bind their service to the greater glory of reason. At the center of this pedagogic exchange stands the open community of free and equal rational subjects, whose aim is to progress to a point unattainable by either student or teacher working in isolation. A pedagogic encounter monopolized by either likewise obstructs the progress of true learning.

Once again, Nietzsche holds the mirror up to the disingenuous ideals of such liberal education and exposes both the absence of any genuine

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dialogue between teacher and student as well as the vicious circularity of the teacher/student process. The Humboldt seminar thus emerges as the fundamental ritual whereby the teacher reproduces an ideological image in the student: "Now the teacher speaks to these students who are listening. Whatever else he thinks and does is cut off from the students' perception by an impassable divide. . . . One mouth speaking, many ears listening, half the number of hands writing: universities therefore . . . establish their philological professoriats for the purpose of training new generations of specialist philologists — who in turn are responsible for the philological tutoring of the schoolboys. This is a vicious circle in which neither philologist nor gymnasium prospers but which above all puts the lash to the university three times over for not being what in its vanity it purports to be — namely, an educational institution." (V, 235-36)

The avowed purpose of the Humboldtian community of education is ostensibly to produce self-reliant, critical thinkers. Yet behind the theory and practice of education for autonomy, Nietzsche sees an insidious hidden curriculum which breeds conformism to rules and submission to abstract authority. Whereas the medieval university measured the success of its indoctrination by the degree to which the content of thought was controlled, the seminar structure produces and perfects the rule-follower, the law-abiding thinker who makes a fetish of form and inference, of argument for the sake of argument, to the detriment of substantive values and of "life." By this peculiar inversion of priorities, the liberal student, trained to identify with formal reason, lives in order to argue better rather than arguing in order to live better. The Humboldt undergraduate thus acquires a premature self-reliance whose very precociousness guarantees that the student will never attain the maturity of any radical critique of values. For Nietzsche, this systematic unreadiness of the student is the sure way of utterly banishing "free" creative thought from the universities and of maintaining the student in unwitting subjection to the authority of abstraction alone: "Happy age, when youth is so wise and cultured that it can spoon-feed itself! . . . The education drilled in by the gymnasium enters through the gates of the university, as it were, ready-made and complete, fastidious in pretension; it makes demands, it lays down the law, it sits in judgment. Do not deceive yourselves about the cultured student: to just the extent that he believes he has taken the Holy Orders of education, so is he still only a school-boy moulded in the hands of his teacher" (V, 232-33).

In the most general sense, the principle of autonomy of the Humboldt university is institutional, i.e., the university itself is seen as an autonomous

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institution. Where the medieval university was tied hand and foot to the interests of church and state, the "enlightened" university liberated itself from such allegiance in the name of academic freedom. Similarly, this "enlightened" university dissociated itself from the economic imperatives of society in its refusal to be merely a vocational institution. But Nietzsche takes issue with this purported institutional autonomy and exposes the vested interests of state and economy alike in the university structure. From the third lecture onwards, he emphasizes the Humboldt university's latent statist interests enshrined in Hegelian liberal-humanist apologetics. What is significant here is how institutional self-reliance cannot but depend on the good will of the liberal state and how that apparently autonomous space which the liberal state grants the university with one hand it takes away with the other by insidiously colonizing the new educational apparatus with its civic creed of piety toward the abstract rule of law: "This mutual independence [of teacher and student] is fulsomely extolled as 'academic freedom.' And to exalt this freedom even further, the one can say just about anything he wants and the other can hear just about anything he wants. Only that at a modest distance, behind both parties, the state stands attentively, its eye watchful, reminding them now and then that it is the purpose and principle peculiar to this oral-aural procedure" (V, 232).

III

Nietzsche sees education in contradiction with the learning process structured as *universitas*. He eschews the term altogether insofar as its root metaphor ("to turn into one") signifies the regimented space-time characterized by the holy trinity of unity, totality, and identity. He provides two significant models, seemingly unrelated, of what higher education might look like in a future culture innocent of universitization. The first, mentioned several times in the lectures, is the classical Greek ideal of *paideia*, which antedates the invention of the university. To the Greeks, education was a matter of formation (*morphosis*), understood in terms carried over from the plastic and, more generally, the technical arts. To become educated was to be shaped and fashioned to embody the cultural ideals of the community as transmitted by tradition. The philosophers, most notably Plato and Aristotle, each in their own distinct way, re-interpreted the formative process of molding as the prerogative of reason, invoking the metaphysical category of matter and form (*hyle/morphe*), with form representing the universal term and matter the particular. When Nietzsche refers to *paideia*, however, he alludes to a primordial, pre-metaphysical

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experience of formation, whose nature has been occluded by the rationalization of education in the proto-universities of the *akademia* and the *stoa*.

Nietzsche's second model is found in the last lecture, almost as an aside. To see tomorrow's educational institution today, he says, all one has to do is: "Look to the *Burschenschaft*." Although the term *Burschenschaft* now commonly refers (and has, since 1848) to the frat-boys of German universities, elitist and conservative in outlook, it originally referred collectively to the suppressed student resistance movement dating from the period of the German Wars of Liberation against the French and the years after 1815. *Burschenschaft* literally means "fellow-ship"; it denotes a "club," "society" or "confraternity." The movement's auto-da-fé occurred at the Wartburg festival (1817) when a number of books considered un-German and reactionary were burned. Also in the same year, it was linked to the murder of the playwright-turned-government-spy, August von Kotzebue, which provoked Metternich in 1819 to issue the Karlsbad decrees banning fraternities and subjecting universities to strict surveillance and censorship. Seeking to justify his acquiescence in the state repression of the student movement, in the "Preface" to *The Philosophy of Right* Hegel accuses the *Burschenschaften* of menacing the progress of modern social rationality in Germany by advancing obscurantist ideals. He admonishes the academics in the movement (specifically, J. F. Fries, a philosophy professor at Heidelberg who had participated in the Wartburg festival), for what he saw as romantic irrationalism. Nietzsche vents his spleen against Hegel by quoting the notorious passage of the Preface which asserts that "whatever is rational is actual and whatever is actual is rational" (V, 234). In the *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Habermas simply apes Hegel when he implies that the early 19th century's German student movement was radically reactionary in nature and counter-Enlightenment in orientation — a conservative revolutionary movement opposed to the project of modernity.

The thrall of rationalist invectives aside, it is possible to discern an internal connection between Nietzsche's two models — the Greek *paideia* and the German *Burschenschaft* — whose implications for higher education are far-reaching. The reason for the appearance of unrelatedness stems from the utter failure to appreciate both terms independently of the supervening gloss placed upon them respectively by classical and Enlightenment reason. Starting with *paideia*, Nietzsche points out how little the original Greek understanding of the metaphor of formation has been appreciated. The Greeks had achieved a profound insight into the nature of

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morphosis, which was effaced in its transformation into a concept. Formation, as Nietzsche realized, is not to be understood primarily in instrumental terms as fitness-for-purpose. Fitness implies the teleological orientation of a calculative thinking given over to the logic of means-end reasoning. Before it ever turned into fitness-for-purpose, the morphotic, Nietzsche maintains, was an expression of Morpheus, god of dreams, delirium, trance and imagination — of the overpowering force of figuration that always exceeds conceptual reduction. If *paideia* was originally conceived as morphotic in this primordial sense, then the formative meaning of education points to the idea of initiation rather than fitness. The same conclusion follows from consideration of the fact that music and gymnastics were originally the twin pillars of Greek education. For music and dance are the ritual media by which the ecstatic act of initiation — alteration of consciousness and obliteration of identity — is expressed.[16] Moreover, music and dance, as understood by the Greeks, were always collective expressions, rhythmic sound and movement performed as a *choros* — the group and the activity being designated by the same word.

The Greek concept of education as radically initiatory thus provides the key to understanding Nietzsche's reference to the *Burschenschaft*, since the process of initiation necessarily implies the existence of some kind of *thiasos* ("company," "confraternity" or "troupe") to which the initiate makes application and gains admission in order to share the experience of life-change. To become educated, then, according to Nietzsche's view, is to be initiated into the life of a group, and a particular kind of group at that—one which constitutes itself ecstatically in and through music and dance. The fundamental unit of education is, therefore, the *thiasos*—the corporate body. This entails first, that constitution of the group and membership within it are not simply a means to an end but, more precisely, the very essence of education; and second, that the meaning of education must always be understood performatively as enactment rooted in the concrete context of community life rather than constatively as reflection from the standpoint of abstract universality.

Nietzsche has the Greek word *myesis* exclusively in mind. In Greek, "to initiate" is *myein* — "to shut," "to close" as of ears, eyes, and lips. The

16. See *Götzen-Dämmerung* (*Twilight of the Idols*), "Was den Deutschen abgeht" ("What the Germans Lack"), §7: "To learn to think: our schools no longer have a clue what this means. . . . Thinking is to be learned in the way that dancing is to be learned, as a form of dancing. . . . For you can't divorce dancing in any form from a noble upbringing, from being able to dance with feet, concepts, and words: need I also say that you have to be able to dance with the pen?"

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initiate is the *mystes*, and the manifold process is denoted by a non-unifying plural: *mysteria*. The English term "initiation," being Latin in origin, may give rise to some confusion: its root metaphor is different from that of the Greek word and, as a consequence, does not allow Nietzsche's inferences and associations idiomatically to be drawn in English.

By means of the image of initiation, Nietzsche is able, at a stroke, to bring education under the joint signs of Dionysus and Apollo, the two signature gods of the mysteries. In the confluence of these two seemingly antagonistic forces, *orgia* ("intoxication") and *katharsis* ("purification"), the troubled Greek spirit had sought to find a solution to its crisis of values. In similar vein, Nietzsche regards education as initiation as offering modern culture a therapeutic antidote to its surfeit of rationality. The shift from fitness to initiation replaces the idea of mastery with that of mediation. To the Greeks, *paideuein* had a remarkable double meaning — "to teach" and "to torment" — whose echo still resounds faintly in the modern term "discipline." They realized that learning is suffering. This profound understanding of education is reflected in the image of the initiatory ordeal of rebirth through death.

In the lectures, written shortly after completion of *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche thus makes implicit use of the Apollonian/Dionysian distinction to develop his view of the essence of education. The future of our educational institutions is made manifest in the genealogy ("birth") of education out of the spirit of music. Nietzsche's proto-concept of genealogy, it should be emphasized, is to be distinguished from both dialectic and critique. It is not to be identified with the notions of evolution or development from an essential origin; these are dialectical terms to which he is averse. Nor is it a critique in the sense of measuring a phenomenon against a predetermined standard. Rather, Nietzschean genealogy brings to light the profane lineage of what presents itself as noble and elevated, its suppressed humble basis in precisely what its self-identity is required to exclude as alien to its nature. Nietzsche is not confusing reasons and causes, as is often objected. For genealogy is not a detached and disinterested theoretical account of things *sub specie aeternitatis*. In its Nietzschean sense, it is always a therapeutic de-sublimation of the sublime, a concrete *katabasis* of the transcendent into the base underworld of its immanent forces. By the same token, genealogy culminates in an *anabasis* from the Hades of the unthought into the transvalued light of new values. Now this twofold structure of thought is expressed by none other than the initiatory ordeal of death and rebirth through ecstatic experience. The rootedness of thinking

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in the *mysteria* is borne out from a different direction by the origin of the word "theory": the *theoros* was no mere disinterested spectator but an active participant in the mystery rites whose authoritative function was to mediate the contradictory manifoldness of the mysteries by surveying steadily and whole the many ways of becoming. What is spectacular about theory, then, is precisely the perpetual unsteadiness of such *coincidentia oppositorum* and the continual deferral of totalization in the face of the irreducible Apollonian/Dionysian pull of thought.

"One should not have points of view, but thoughts!" snaps Nietzsche's philosopher (I, 150), suggesting that there must perforce be something unsayable about this realm of thought, a doubleness and indirection that will not translate into any decisive point of view (*Standpunkt*). As Nietzsche expresses it pithily in "On Truth and Lies in an Extra-moral Sense," the aim of thought is dissimulation not representation — *Ver-stellung* not *Vor-stellung*. The implication for education is, therefore, quite evident: if thought is to be the ultimate aim of education, then the structure of thinking must itself be embodied in the structure of educational institutions themselves. This is as it was with Greek *paideia*, which recognized the basis of education in music and gymnastics. As far as the university is concerned, therefore, where it has erred is in imposing a technical imperative of fitness on education which is inimical to thought. The university as the institution where the light of reason shines embodies the structure of the "point of view." Nietzsche's idea of the *Burschenschaft* would then seem to be his attempt to conceive of an extant foreign body within the university which offers to reorient learning toward thought by regrounding education within the ecstatic experience of *thiasotic* initiation.

As to the therapeutic nature of *burschenschaftliche Bildung* as antidote to the universitization of higher education, it is defined by *Schole* ("leisure") rather than "turning-into-one." "Leisure" here does not mean freedom from labor and utility, rank idleness, but rather the absence of authority. In this second sense, it contrasts with its opposite *anangke* ("necessity"), which, as the word-root indicates, is expressed in terms of the "yoke" of bondage. *Schole* is not an institution — a "school" in the modern sense — nor is it a condition or state of being as the English word implies ("at leisure"). It is a mysterious and an-archic power, which shuts the eyes, the ears and the mouths to the functional imperative of fitness-for-purpose and sets everyday life out of joint in order that one may see, hear, and speak with the spontaneity of *en-th[e]ou-siasmos* (literally: "in-divination").

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The End of Public Education?

Paul Piccone

Usual approaches to the crisis of American public education have tended to focus primarily on how to improve the existing framework rather than on replacing it altogether. The latter alternative is hardly ever considered, not only because it would be a massive undertaking but, even if such a possibility were entertained, no one seems to have the faintest idea about what to replace the present system with. On the whole, however, there has been no substantial discussion of alternatives mainly because the existing educational framework is perceived as basically sound, requiring only relatively minor adjustments. As a result, the nature of the crisis has been systematically misunderstood and most efforts to resolve it not only fail but occasionally make it worse.

The "progressive" approach, supported by the liberal establishment, the teachers' unions, as well as the rest of the education industry, generally reduces the crisis to a question of budgeting. The assumption is that it is essentially a matter of taxpayers' reluctance to finance the kind of system needed to educate future generations. More cynical views tend to interpret the crisis mainly in terms of the education establishment's incompetence, aloofness and self-interest, and thus to define the problem in terms of low standards, lax curriculum, unqualified teachers, etc., i.e., technical details amenable to technical solutions. From this perspective, all that is needed is more vigilance and the political will to rectify matters. Even conservative critiques blaming the crisis on the interjection of extraneous political agendas such as affirmative action, social promotion or open admission, often suggest that, were these policies reversed, the system would be fundamentally sound once again. In all cases, it is allegedly a matter of either money, rigor or autonomy rather than of major institutional flaws.

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Of course, better financing, more rigorous programs and less political interference usually help. But if the crisis is actually *structural*, i.e. rooted in the broader institutional framework, all of these proposed remedies will, at best, only retard rather than reverse the current decline. This helps explain why, during the past few years, despite efforts to, e.g., increase spending and streamline instruction, there have been no significant improvements. On the contrary, the crisis has intensified as cultural illiteracy increases among high school graduates and colleges fail to prepare students for a career, not to mention life.

Elaborate descriptions of this predicament abound, as a whole subsector of the education establishment, financed generously by a panicked government bureaucracy and worried private foundations, has come into being to deal with these issues. It would be redundant here to list once again the endless number of perceived problems and cite the scores of studies analyzing every proposed remedy. It is more useful, instead, to begin rethinking the crisis of education as an epiphenomenon of broader social dynamics having to do with the logic of "modernization," "rationalization" and "centralization" — processes which have come to be accepted as inevitable and irreversible. Here the danger is that, by framing the problem in such general terms, it becomes so global and unmanageable as to rule out the possibility of any immediate solution, thus encouraging resignation to the inevitability of the *status quo* and acquiescence-by-default to the various piecemeal projects proposed to improve it. Yet, in order to approach the problems confronting public education as structural faults requiring drastic solutions, it is essential to step back and raise fundamental questions about what over time has come to be accepted as "obvious." Even if this yields no immediate results, it helps redefine the problems so that at least it becomes possible to tackle them in ways that eventually may lead to more effective approaches. The deployment of new social policies always presupposes the construction of a social consensus in the wake of the prior acceptance of new ideas.

Limitations of "Public" Education

Today the "public" character of education is regarded as "natural," "normal" and, most important of all, necessary to insure equal opportunity in a democratic society. Especially in the US, public education has functioned as a mainspring for social mobility and is broadly perceived as providing the kind of equal opportunity usually unavailable elsewhere in a society characterized by wide economic disparities. It has long been part

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of conventional wisdom that formal education is the path to a better life for those economically underprivileged with enough intelligence, will and determination to succeed. Thus government educational programs have been very popular, at least since WWII, when the GI bill financed the college education of scores of returning veterans who would have otherwise never been able to afford one.

Yet today public education remains as stratified as any other sector of society. To the extent that secondary education is usually funded through local property taxes, poor school districts cannot compete with rich ones in terms of available resources. But even if funding were uniform, things would not be considerably different. As the experience of busing has shown, even when students from poor neighborhoods are transported to classrooms in districts with better teachers and facilities, for those who lack the essential cultural capital provided by intact families, stable communities and extended networks, formal instruction remains difficult, distant and inaccessible. When enrolled in these programs, minority students from disintegrated communities often have difficulty assimilating and competing in foreign suburban environments. They are thus bound to fail and, in the process, reinforce stereotypes of innate inferiority. The same can be said for the public university system where, independently of explicit policies to prevent it (such as affirmative action or open admission) ordinarily only the upper middle classes with the proper cultural capital qualify to gain access to elite state universities, relegating all others to the lower levels of state or community colleges.

At any rate, American "public education" is neither "natural," having been institutionalized only during the last century as part of the broader project of constituting national identity, nor "normal," since its "public" character must necessarily restrict what schools can transmit across generations. Unlike the Greek notion of *paideia* or the related German concept of *Bildung*, which describe the process of formation whereby young people become initiated into their culture through formal instruction and, most important, the aesthetic-mimetic internalization of those traditions and social practices which cannot be captured conceptually, "public" education must limit itself to the teaching of *objective* public knowledge. It is no accident that the Greeks regarded gymnastics, dance and music as integral parts of education. Only through living practices and active participation in the lifeworld is it possible to fully internalize one's culture by physically absorbing that precategorical otherness conceptual thinking (and formal instruction) necessarily excludes. This is the fundamental

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dimension of *doxa*, religion and values that public education in culturally heterogeneous societies cannot deal with without threatening that very heterogeneity and, consequently, must relegate to the private domain. This standard pedagogical division of labor, however, remains viable only as long as the private domain remains sufficiently strong to do its part.

Given the peculiar political context within which it was developed, American public education could only be prefigured at the end of the last century as a highly idiosyncratic system. In order to function effectively within its particular constitutional framework, characterized by a split between strong, relatively autonomous and homogeneous local communities and a complementary public sphere where the common interests of the various subunits are to be articulated, that system had to be confined to the kind of presumably universal objective knowledge everyone could accept as such: the so-called three Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic) plus science and technology. Only by buying into the propositions that knowledge is value-free and religion is superstition and dogma — 19th century Enlightenment and positivist assumptions typical of the French Revolution, which were never part of the original American *ethos* and, at any rate, have long since been discredited in the age of postmodernity — was it possible for public education to expand to cover practically every discipline, as it happened in the 20th century.

Despite considerable efforts to centralize and rationalize education away from allegedly prejudiced parents and local communities, at least at the secondary level, public education is still legally limited to objective knowledge free of all denominational encrustations. Thus it must systematically avoid becoming formally embroiled in the axiologically-laden mimetic-aesthetic dimension, the internalization of which remains essential for the healthy formation of individuality. In countries such as the US, where the separation of church and state is one of the most fundamental constitutional tenets, "public knowledge" must be sharply differentiated and prevented from encroaching on "private belief" — something entrusted to socializing agencies independent of the state and rooted in local communities. This state of affairs, however, presupposes the existence of a viable community life independent of government intrusions. During the past century and a half, however, the logic of modernization has gradually eroded this essential political presupposition, precipitating the entire institutional framework into a major social crisis of which the crisis of public education is but one of its symptoms.

Entrusted with safeguarding its citizens' well-being, in order to fulfill

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its mandate, the all-pervasive "welfare state" (which in the US began to develop at the turn of the century and became fully institutionalized with the New Deal in the 1930s) increasingly colonizes all aspects of social reality. In the process, however, it erodes whatever autonomous community life thrives outside the public domain. Thus practically every crisis becomes an excuse for further government intervention, to the point where eventually nothing escapes its reach. In deploying seemingly beneficial programs, such as Social Security and Medicare, or in dealing with obvious problems such as crime and natural calamities, as well as the "evils" of racism, discrimination, domestic violence, substance abuse, second-hand smoke inhalation, etc., the government gradually penetrates all crevices of social life, whether in the family, the workplace, or the community. Even voluntary associations — the main institutions of that "civil society" celebrated by an increasingly fashionable social science — become thoroughly regulated through fiscal policies which, in dispensing "tax-exempt" status, turns them into *de facto* branches of the state and requires them to meet whatever conditions the central government chooses to impose. When all is said and done, those "private beliefs" originally cherished as the bedrock of the American political framework are systematically marginalized into optional, part-time status and gradually deteriorate to the level of irrational residues often blamed for all the social dysfunctions the government is increasingly expected to manage.

The main unintended consequence of this process of systematic centralization and consequent community marginalization is the development of a state-dependent personality unable to sustain the democratic institutions of a free society. No longer constituted primarily by traditions and other informal community structures, the mimetic-aesthetic dimension is gradually penetrated by the culture industry. Lacking any autonomous belief system grounding values and providing a strong sense of identity, these state-dependent individuals become easy prey for the subtle manipulations of a culture industry, which now takes over the role of defining taste in order to stimulate and regulate consumption. It is well known that advertising works best with those weak personalities accustomed to having public authority not only provide most goods and services but also define good and bad, right and wrong, beauty and ugliness. This is the very same dynamic, albeit within different socio-political conditions, that the early Frankfurt School, in their first major study in the mid-1930s, *Authorität und Familie*, identified what led to the rise of Nazism in Germany and, eventually, after its emigration to the US, the main cause of the

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degeneration of liberal into totalitarian societies.[1]

Thus state and market combine to displace society and community. Within such a new context, public education cannot pretend any more to prepare individuals already endowed with their own personal identity for a productive public life. Rather, under the pretense of instilling in pupils the kind of "self-esteem" and "sensitivity" which the severely weakened informal community structures can no longer provide, public education ends up advocating an allegedly neutral substitute for religion: secular humanism, i.e., a pseudo-religious placebo concealing scientism, meaninglessness and nihilism. In a situation where there is no longer a strong church to be kept

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1. Still embroiled in Marxist assumptions privileging the economy as the decisive social determinant, that pioneering study traced the longing for authoritarian rule (the *Führer*) to capitalist domination and the subsequent disintegration of patriarchal authority within the proletarianized family. To the extent that, still caught in scientistic Enlightenment assumptions, the members of the Frankfurt School were also flirting with the new fairy-tales of psychoanalysis as the "science" of personality-formation, at that time they sought to explain the widespread acceptance of Nazism in Germany as a capitalist social pathology reducible to displaced patriarchal authority. Only a few years latter, during their American exile, did they come to the conclusion that totalitarianism was not merely a German idiosyncrasy but the outcome of the identity logic of liberalism, whereby the formal concept (in this case the state) gradually redefines that reality it seeks to apprehend (the informal aesthetic-mimetic dimension of communal life) in its own terms, dismissing all the rest as irrational residues. Traditional beliefs and concrete particularity are thus displaced by convenient new mythologies such as nationalism, racism and anti-Semitism, and, in the absence of any binding transcendental axiology, rationalism collapses into a nihilistic hyper-irrationalism whereby events such as the Holocaust can no longer be distinguished from other routine state functions. That is when Adorno and Horkheimer must have realized that the logic of their analysis, brilliantly developed in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, was leading them back to the anti-universalist and anti-liberal views of conservatives and other people associated with the "Conservative Revolution" in Germany they had earlier dismissed as incriminated in the rise of Nazism. In fact, Adorno's and Horkheimer's "particularity," the safegarding of which they postulated as the main task of emancipatory politics, is structurally isomorphic with Carl Schmitt's defense of "the political" — a dimension characterized by a people's self-definition in terms of their own particular mythology and beliefs, which Schmitt saw as being annihilated by liberal depolitization. As a result, instead of developing the political implications of the dialectic of enlightenment along the lines of Walter Benjamin's critique of progress and by focusing on the reconstitution of communities (something summarily dismissed as "Romantic reaction"), Adorno ended up wasting his time in attempts to identify the defining traits of those "authoritarian personalities" presumably responsible for anti-Semitism and eventually totalitarianism — thus implicitly whitewashing liberalism and the Enlightenment of any complicity in the 20th century's major catastrophes or in the totalitarian involution of both the Left and the Right. The aesthetic-mimetic dimension reappeared as the decisive category in his aesthetic theory in the 1960s, but only as accessible by exceptional artists and philosophers in their search for truth, rather than as an inextricable part of the non-alienated life of all healthy individuals.

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separate from the even stronger state, the latter inevitably takes over by default the socializing functions previously entrusted to the former. Under the pretense of enforcing the traditional constitutional separation of church and state, the latter assumes the role of the former by initiating pupils into its own "politically correct" ideology marketed not as a new religion dealing with those ultimate beliefs and moral values traditionally relegated to theology, but as a neutral universally-valid body of knowledge. Since, however, the new pseudo-religion must still present itself as operating entirely outside the value-laden mimetic-aesthetic domain now emptied of all that meaningful axiological and ontological content previously provided by religion and local communities, it is condemned to failure. The lifeworld becomes colonized by the culture industry and the individuality-constituting aesthetic-mimetic processes are consequently aborted. Barred from explicitly engaging in these processes and rituals, secular humanism ends up truncating *paideia* and *Bildung* into formal indoctrination and the educational system can thus produce only manipulable, sub-individual consumers rather than responsible citizens. Eventually, this statist ideology becomes the main threat to democracy by undermining its main precondition: a society of informed, responsible individuals, now displaced by default with experts, administrators, technocrats, politicians, etc.

Public education itself is not responsible for this unenviable predicament. Confronted with the systematic disintegration of community structures increasingly penetrated by the government, it has been forced to take on extraneous tasks it was never meant to carry out and which it cannot possibly fulfill. With the introduction of lunch programs, health monitoring and a growing array of *in loco parentis* functions communities and families are increasingly unable to fulfill, schools have morphed from educational into general welfare institutions which can no longer achieve their original pedagogical objectives. Especially in the poorest school districts with large minority populations, from the earliest age pupils are now socialized into public dependence and private irresponsibility. Whether one learns anything or not, promotion to the next grade is often assured by a policy of "social promotion" allegedly meant to eliminate the social stigma of failure but actually legitimating permanent ignorance and lifelong dependence. On the next level, "open admission" guarantee even the most unprepared students entrance into college, which end up devoting most of their resources to remedial work and forfeiting any pretense to provide any education "higher" than what in earlier generations was provided by junior high schools. In catering to already socially-damaged students,

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educational institutions themselves deteriorate: integrity evaporates, grades become inflated, teachers are demoralized and, as Paul Simon's famous song "Kodachrome" states, if there is any real learning taking place at all and pupils can still think after high school, it is probably *despite* rather than *because* of the institution.

Because of its new role as a socializing and policing agency rather than an educational one, the present system of public education in the US tends to destroy rather than prepare an educated citizenry. In the absence of organic communities able to constitute individuality through cultural mimesis as well as formal instruction, the all-pervasive government ends up managing an increasingly alienated polity divided between experts, bureaucrats and administrators, who still have access to the kind of cultural capital protecting them against general social disintegration, and the permanently disempowered "clients" at their mercy. Politically incompetent to participate in democratic practices, these clients are all too glad to abdicate their responsibilities as citizens to a liberal system run by elite professionals who find themselves increasingly called upon to instill what they consider universal values minimally necessary for maintaining social order.

To the extent that within such a context these social values can be deployed only as contingent legal mandates, they lack the stability and solidity of religious absolutes, which they can never effectively substitute. Consequently, not only can they not constitute that socio-psychological cultural capital necessary for individuality and *ipso facto* democratic citizenship, but they perpetuate and intensify the problem they were meant to solve. Given the peculiar predicament within which public educational has to function, both instruction (or whatever remains of it) and indoctrination fail. Judging from the results — persistently high rates of substance abuse, unwanted pregnancies, high-school dropouts, etc. — not even massive advertising campaigns seem to help. As with all ideologies, the more they are institutionally imposed, the less they succeed, generating in the process either widespread resentment, as in the case of communism in the former Soviet bloc, or passive acquiescence and active disregard, as in many Western societies.

The Rise and Decline of Public Education

The crisis of higher education is the indirect result of this same state of affairs. Traditional college education increasingly splits into two equally bankrupt branches: vocational training and liberal arts. Since technology changes too fast to be formalized into any particular curriculum, as

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Michael Taves and Tim Luke[2] have convincingly shown, it ends up taken over by industry itself, emigrates out of the physical university into cyberspace, or becomes privatized. As for the humanities, the secular version of traditional religious education, they rapidly deteriorate into a plethora of special interest ideologies and programs (not only the obvious Women's Studies, Cultural Studies, Black Studies, Ethnic Studies, Gay Studies, etc., but also the more established subdisciplines such as business ethics, gerontology, etc.) formally adhering to government-mandated universalism while concealing particularistic agendas.

All of this is well known and well documented.[3] Since the rise and growth of public education is perceived as part of inevitable and thus unassailable "progress," not much effort has been devoted to inquiring into precisely how such a state of affairs came about and whether it was not doomed from the very beginning. Contrary to standard liberal and conservative criticisms, the current crisis is neither a mere aberration resulting from rapid growth, the opening up of educational opportunities to hitherto excluded masses of people, the inevitable outcome of austerity measures, etc., nor the symptom of an inexorable cultural decline. Rather, it is an epiphenomenon of a much broader crisis of American society having to do with the failure of the late 19th century modernist project of redefining American identity and ideals to meet the challenges of, first, industrialization, and then, globalization. In the post-Cold War era, when the modernist mythology of bigness, standardization, rationalization and centralization is finally recognized as universally bankrupt (after the collapse of its most advanced exponent, the USSR), the crisis of education mirrors the crisis of modernity. Thus it cannot be solved by deploying any of the various modernist strategies presently being crafted and tested throughout the country, but by challenging its very assumptions and by reconstructing its trajectory — not as a temporary pathology in an otherwise irresistible unfolding of "progress" but as the logical outcome of a misguided but *reversible* project.

The crisis of American education can be traced to the *post-bellum* project of creating a distinct national culture to displace the *ethos* of a colonial society still safeguarded by a federalist political framework — that *ethos* which gave rise not only to the US as a federation but which embodied whatever could be identified as "American specificity." While

2. See Michael Taves, "The New Fragmentation in Higher Education"; and Tim Luke, "Miscast Canons? The Future of Universities in the Era of Flexible Specialization," both in this issue of *Telos*.

3. See David Pan, "The Crisis of the Humanities and the End of the University," in this issue of *Telos*.

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nationalist folklore celebrates US world hegemony in the 20th century as the result of that project of nation-building and, for better or worse, the earlier *federalist* model was in fact effectively displaced by a *nationalist* one, there is no necessary causal connection between centralization and economic success. Similarly, it does not follow that alternative federalist paths may not have been equally or even more successful, without having to pay the high social price exacted by the modernist strategy. It was at that historical juncture, during the second half of the 19th century when the US undertook a project of rapid industrialization, that public education was first planned out and eventually institutionalized as part and parcel of the Americanization strategy. There was nothing exceptional in this, since similar projects were underwritten in practically every Western society in the process of industrializing, modernizing and constituting themselves as nations. Because of its peculiar history rooted in religious persecution and the early settlers' commitment to self-determination and local autonomy, in the US the sharp separation of church and state has remained sacrosanct and it has retarded the homogenization of organic communities. One of the unintended consequences of this has been that the dialectic of modernity has effected other culturally heterogeneous, advanced industrial societies even more than the US, where state penetration of everyday life has been resisted every step of the way, leaving American society much stronger than most at the end of the 20th century.

At the time of the initial institutionalization of public education, only a few rare scholars, such as Pierre Joseph Proudhon and Friedrich Nietzsche,[4] warned about the dangers of entrusting education to the state, and since then there has been hardly any sustained debate concerning either the implications of such a choice or any inquiry into viable alternatives. Today any kind of discussion along these lines is usually ruled out on the ground that a modern educational system independent of state

4. See Valerie Allen and Ares Axiotis, "Nietzsche on the Future of Education," in this issue of *Telos*. While the authors provide an accurate reconstruction of Nietzsche's early views on education as a violent attack on state-run systems contraposed to genuine education as "initiation," they do not seem to realize the extent to which initiation can only refer to internalizing a concrete culture and tradition, i.e., becoming a full member of a particular community. Instead, after unnecessarily mystifying their conclusions with *mysteria*, *orgia*, *catharsis* and other irrelevant obfuscatory Greek concepts, they end up presenting initiation as either the mere joining of a social club or the functional equivalent of an LSD trip into madness: an *entheousiasmos* translated not simply as a pedestrian "enthusiasm," but broken into its particular components allegedly to reveal some deeper transcendental truth. While this may reflect what goes on in some of today's more fashionable English departments under the pretense of "academic freedom" and disciplinary autonomy, it has little to do either with Nietzsche or with education.

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financing is inconceivable; allegedly, no school can survive without state support. But state funding ultimately comes from taxation, i.e., from the pockets of the same citizens who subsequently receive these funds back in the form of educational services for their children. The main difference between a government-run system and other, presumably private ones run by local communities is that what comes back from Washington D.C. or the state capital has a large bite taken out for bureaucratic/administrative costs and a variety of mandatory conditions attached to it, presumably in order to guarantee the attainment of collective objectives not otherwise pursued by more private institutions. Thus the ultimate costs of universal state-run education is not only bureaucratic overhead but the displacement of local *democratic* prerogatives concerning what ought to be taught and transmitted by a universalist *liberal* criteria elaborated by "experts" determined to bring about that standardization and homogenization necessary to guarantee the kind of "democratic" equality of access and opportunity that allegedly cannot be left to the whims of a free, democratic constituency operating independently of these experts' superior wisdom.

For almost a century, corporate and bureaucratic interests (such as the Carnegies and the Rockefellers in the late 19th century, and the "progressives" in the 20th century) succeeded in mediatizing a broad consensus concerning the desirability of the centralization and universalization of education. In the late 19th century, a rapidly expanding American capitalism needed not only a homogenized working class to meet the requirements of American industry but also, later on, culturally homogenized consumers who would appreciate and purchase the new products cheaply mass-produced and mass-distributed thanks to the new industrial technologies. As has often been pointed out, what was needed was a new citizen at ease in the new urban environment and fully integrated into the new modes of production and distribution — a national type rather different from the mythical frugal farmer of traditional American folklore, the God-fearing WASP devoted to family and church. A state-sponsored educational system was the ideal social agency to constitute this new American citizen and facilitate the realization of the new secular gospel of inevitable "progress." Opposition to such a project was practically non-existent after the defeat of the South in the War Between the States and the subsequent muting of local and particularistic interests demonized as both elitist (in the North, where the traditional educational system was designed primarily to reproduce the cultural elite) and racist (in the South, where blacks had been systematically excluded). As for the growing number of immigrants

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flooding into American cities to meet the labor needs of the exploding industrial system, they fit right into the program. To them, universal education extended not only the promise of integration and assimilation (needed to participate effectively in modern industry) but also the hope of upward cultural mobility (the fulfillment of the "American dream").

It must have seemed like an ideal arrangement. Business would be provided with sophisticated workers to make highly profitable mass-produced commodities and a properly acculturated class of consumers would demand them to satisfy their new needs inculcated by the nascent culture industry; the new class of professional experts would have lucrative jobs, power and prestige by running such a system; while the people would receive an education, access to a culture hitherto reserved to the lucky few, and the promise of accelerated social mobility predicated on meritocracy. Who could possibly be against such a utopian vision? The Mephistophelean costs of such a bargain, however, turned out to be nothing less than the American *ethos* of local autonomy, self-sufficiency and self-governance — the very socio-political preconditions which had contributed to the creativity and entrepreneurship responsible for the spectacular success of American society during the subsequent century. By undertaking a massive project of nation-building, the US effectively began to trade in its unique federal model for a version of the French nation-state, thus unwittingly buying into precisely that same dogmatic and intolerant worldview the first few generations of immigrants were running away from.

The fact of the matter is that the US was never a *nation* in the traditional sense of a homogeneous people with a shared vision, common values, institutions, religion, language, customs, etc. In fact, the colonies were established mostly by persecuted cultural deviants who sought to retain in the New World the kind of cultural particularity increasingly denied them in their old countries. The original American *ethos* was predicated on a radical rejection of precisely those homogenizing nationalist forces of modernity which were beginning to reshape European societies by, e.g., imposing religious orthodoxy. Contrary to the widespread Weberian thesis of Protestantism as the cultural precondition of capitalism, the Reformation had not been a *revolutionary* event seeking to usher in any new eras or new faiths but a paradigmatically *premodern* attempt to return to the *status quo ante* of true Christianity by rejecting a corrupt Catholic Church well on the way of bureaucratizing its institutional framework along the imperial lines of the nascent absolutist states. This is the cloth out of which the original American settlers were cut. This is why, when it came to constituting themselves as a

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political entity after the successful War of Independence, the people of the original 13 colonies decided in favor of a *federation* of autonomous political entities rather than a homogeneous *nation* much like the ones that had originally denied them their freedom to live in their cultural particularity.

Beyond Public Education?

These seemingly extraneous historical considerations are important to understand the kind of locally rooted and church dominated system the late 19th century educational reforms sought to replace or "rationalize" with the creation of the new US Department of Education. It prefigured the introduction of universal basic education and the development of a "modern" university system very different from the constellation of denominational colleges hitherto entrusted with ensuring the reproduction of the cultural elite and thus perpetuating the particular cultures predominant at the time. The nationalization of American culture thus amounted to the importation of precisely those "modernizing" conditions the pilgrims and their successors had originally fled to avoid. Unlike in Europe, however, where this "modernization" was administratively imposed and often took Dickensian forms of persecution and repression, in the US it was popularly demanded and successfully marketed as progress, universal well-being, and collective emancipation. Thus, except for a few marginal and recalcitrant groups like the Amish and the Mormons, who either fled further West, beyond the reach of the US Cavalry, or barricaded themselves in their traditional communities, there was hardly any resistance to what has come to be accepted as not only a "normal" but also a "natural" system of mass education.

The problem with universal, state-sponsored, secondary education is not that it tries to teach everyone how to read and write or otherwise insure a minimal amount of collective literacy necessary to participate in the modern world; nor is the problem with the modern university that it seeks to develop every possible field of knowledge. Rather, it has to do with the extraneous, homogenizing *nationalist* agenda with which both projects were inextricably linked. The unintended, detrimental consequences of this nationalist consolidation are the further disintegration of that autonomous, local community framework without which today's liberalism in the US tends not only to intensify many of the problems it has created, but of self-destructing into a kind of benign welfare-totalitarianism. While such a state of affairs may appear as a rather comfortable option for most of the already terminally clientized population, it is still an alternative which, even more importantly, tends to undermine the conditions of its own permanence by generating crisis

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after crisis as it systematically destabilizes those hidden control mechanisms provided by autonomous communities and a thriving private domain.

The deployment of public education is part and parcel of this dialectic of modernity. While providing some immediate results and solving some important problems, the government's gradual take-over of mass education has contributed considerably to the marginalization of local, particularistic cultures and the disempowerment of local communities. It drastically altered the social conditions indispensable for the perpetuation of the existing political system and in the process generated the kind of social problems that had hitherto been successfully avoided. Worse yet, and despite the fact that the political system is still misleadingly designated as "liberal-democratic," this nationalizing project triggered a major political shift by altering the social context conducive to democracy understood as collective participation in public affairs to one allowing only for a liberalism predicated on the allegedly universal values and transcendental human rights postulated by secular humanism and run by a technocratic elite requiring popular ratification only for relatively irrelevant administrative details. Generally unacknowledged, this shift has qualitatively altered the character of the American political system, while leaving unchanged its axiological foundations and the predominant mode of democratic legitimacy. The outcome of this paradoxical predicament is the many bizarre and otherwise unexplainable pathologies of today's national political life.

The urgency of a radical re-interpretation of the crisis of public education is not the result of arbitrary and alarmist warnings about mere possibilities, but of the extension of current trends from the viewpoint of a broader historical vision. In undermining the conditions necessary for the system's very perpetuation, this reconstitution of society along primarily liberal lines — a process paralleled by the educational system's taking on the role of a general welfare agency in socializing pupils and illegitimately indoctrinating them into the predominant pseudo-religion — threatens the eventual obliteration of those very liberal values it was meant to guarantee. The tendential bureaucratic take-over of all social functions — what the Frankfurt school referred to as the development of the totally administered society (an outcome welcomed by the new class of technocrats allegedly required to insure the system's functioning, and feared by the traditional critics from both the Left and the Right) — is impossible. As the Soviet experience has shown, and contrary to self-serving claims of Western victory over the "evil empire," long before achieving anything close to total administration through no matter how many five-year plans,

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the logic of modernity gradually erodes its socio-psychological preconditions precipitating those systems committed to it into a series of crises necessitating the eventual abandonment of the whole project. Far from resulting from any landing by the Marines or other military actions, the Soviet system collapsed under the weight of its own hyper-rationality.

Unfortunately, these events are too recent and no such a lesson has yet been learned by the self-appointed defenders of liberalism who, as in Marx' famous remark in *The 18th Brumaire*, march into the future by confusing it with the past. Thus any critique of liberalism[5] — even those seeking to pre-

5. This is particularly true of most American political theorists fascinated by Carl Schmitt's critique of liberalism, yet so obsessed with his by now denounced *ad nauseam* past embroilment with the National Socialism and crude anti-Semitic allusions as to invariably end up dismissing him altogether as a mere fascist apologist. See John P. McCormick, *Carl Schmitt Critique of Liberalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), where the author's careerism and compulsive conformism subverts what could have turned out to be a first-rate analysis of Schmitt's thought. Thus in order to continue demonizing Schmitt as the paradigmatic fascist and the foe of current PC orthodoxy camouflaged as "liberalism," McCormick not only shows no understanding of fascism as a Left deviation and a closed historical phenomenon of the inter-war period, but systematically misunderstands Schmitt's notions of technics and technology. What Schmitt attacked as the "technological" character of liberalism has nothing to do with fascism, but is part of a broader and fragmentary critique of modernity. The much-discussed but little-understood concept of the "political" is predicated on the rejection of universally-valid values as either an unwarranted hypostatization of some particular system to the level of universality, or the uncritical adherence to a repressed secularized Christianity still grounding Enlightenment "reason." Since the human condition precludes direct access to absolute knowledge, all systems of thought — including liberalism — turn out to be cultural constructs based on the particular mythology of the various societies whose political identity is defined precisely by adherence to its particular values and beliefs. The critique of liberalism as technistic is therefore obvious: to the extent that it denies the socio-historical contingency and particularity of the political by substituting instead what it unwarrantedly takes to be the universally-valid Enlightenment values, liberalism not only falls into ethnocentrism but, and what is more serious, obliterates its own particular mythological foundations and ends up denying that social and personal identity without which human beings cannot function. As other Left critics have also pointed out, liberalism is one-dimensional in that it collapses the transcendental dimension of being — what makes humans "human" — into the immediacy of the given, reduced to the level of pure instrumentality. This is not all that different from the Marxist critique of alienation which, however, reduces identity to a function of the division of labor, while wrongly presupposing that an abstraction such as "humanity" has already substituted for a particular peoples' mythological past irreversibly sedimented in their particular culture. As in the Marxist critique, in Schmitt also the problem with liberalism is that it tends to self-destruct. McCormick cites, but as usual misunderstands, Schmitt's "testament," where traditional liberal values (rather than the arbitrary new PC version McCormick advocates) are associated with human dignity and "the plight of European jurisprudence" has to do with the inability to continue defending these values. Contrary to McCormick's PC version of "liberalism," both Critical Theory and the Right have historically criticized the homogenization presupposed by currently fashionable gender/class/ race discourses as a capitalist pathology having nothing to do with traditional liberal values.

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serve liberal values or vindicating the primacy of democracy — is summarily demonized and dismissed as potentially "fascist." The approach to most social problems today is in terms of not enough "rationalization" or the need to complete "the project of modernity." In this sense, more important than seeking appropriate answers, it is urgent to begin to ask the right questions. A reconsideration of the "public" character of education is not only absent from the agenda now, but unlikely to be placed there any time soon.

Does this mean that the solution to problems of public education must wait for the resolution of the current crisis of liberalism? While the reconstitution of local autonomous communities and of fundamental social institutions such as the family is not a mere pedagogical problem (and although the success of both projects is a precondition for overcoming the crisis of public education), this does not mean that nothing can be done in the meantime. Beginning to frame the problems along these lines already checkmates out of public discourse a number of counterproductive proposals likely to fuel rather than defuse the crisis: seemingly "rational" proposals, such as national standards and more direct federal involvement in public education, which tend to centralize power and decisions while further marginalizing local communities. Similarly, it may prevent the summary dismissal of piecemeal measures like the voucher system which, notwithstanding justified concerns about the possibility of further extending central government control, may actually extend a modicum of local control over public education and thus re-establish some connection between the value-laden aesthetic-mimetic dimension and formal class-room instruction.[6]

More importantly, framing problems in this way broadens the focus from purely classroom-related issues to the supporting institutions without which it is impossible to transmit knowledge and culture. Dissatisfaction with the present system is so high that already there is considerable experimentation in local communities with radical alternatives. Instigated by self-serving teachers' unions, these experiments have hitherto been discouraged or, in extreme cases, even outlawed. A radical redirection of public opinion away from government solutions and toward more community-friendly alternatives may go a long way to prepare the cultural climate for eventual drastic reforms prefiguring the introduction of radical alternatives. The transmission of culture and the proper formation of future generations, not to mention the safeguarding of liberal values, depends on it.

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6. See Paul Gottfried, "Private Education and Public Administration," in this issue of *Telos*.

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Out of Africa: Communication Theory and Cultural Hegemony

Emmanuel C. Eze

In the first part of Habermas' *Theory of Communicative Action*, Africa serves as the paradigmatic "mythical" world against which the author establishes the achievements of the modern "rational" worldview.[1] In addition, the modern societies analyzed through concepts such as "internal colonization," "the uncoupling of system and lifeworld," "the welfare state," etc., in the second volume of that work are capitalist nation-states whose economic and political growth presupposed, from the 17th century on, imperial dominions, slavery, colonization and accompanying ideologies of white supremacy.[2] Thus, in Habermas' thought, Africa is present only as a *negative* case.[3]

When Talcott Parsons wrote that "What is thought of as *modern* society

1. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Vol. 1: *Reason and Rationalization of Society* (hereafter cited as TCAI), tr. by Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984) especially pp. 8-74.

2. Hannah Arendt clearly demonstrates these historical connections in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Bruce Jovanovich, 1973).

3. This is different from the "deficiency" Nancy Fraser found in Habermas' work concerning gender issues. Fraser noted that "apart from a brief discussion of feminism as a 'new social movement,' Habermas says virtually nothing about gender in *The Theory of Communicative Action*. . . this is a serious deficiency, but it . . . simply necessitates that one read the work in question from the standpoint of an absence, that one extrapolate from things Habermas does say to things he does not, that one reconstruct how various matters of concern to feminists would appear from his perspective had those matters been thematized." See Nancy Fraser, *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 114. In the case of Africa it is not necessary to extrapolate. In the first volume of *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Habermas' use of "Africa" is explicit, extensive and thematic.

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took shape in the 17th century in the northest corner of the European system of societies, in Great Britain, Holland and France," he added that "subsequent development of modern societies included three processes of revolutionary structural change: the industrial revolution, the democratic revolution, and the educational revolutions."[4] What Parsons failed to mention, however, is the complex historical relations between his "northest corner of European system of societies" and the "southest rest of the world" — especially during the rise of the cultural, political and economic phenomena that constitute modernity. The sources, logics and effects of the "revolutionary structural change" that occurred in Europe during and after the 17th century cannot be fully understood by focusing only on endogenous while neglecting exogenous forces such as Europe's economic, political, cultural and military encounters with non-European worlds such as China, India, Africa and America. These events shaped and continue to shape today's world. Attempts to thematize these often traumatic and enduring exogenous relations between Europe and the rest of the world (or, in Parsons' language, "the North" and "the South") have been variously described in terms of "imperialism," "colonialism" and, more recently, "postcolonialism." These analytic categories play no role in Habermas' theory of modernity. This is what renders paradoxical the uses of Africa in *The Theory of Communicative Action*: how can one speak of Africa in order to understand Europe without reference to imperial and colonial encounters? The answer is simple: Habermas' idea of Africa is thoroughly ahistorical, conceptually unenlightening and, to use his own standard of judgement, "politically regressive."

Habermas and Africa

The ahistoricity of Habermas' Africa is a problem because it occludes not only actual understanding of the real Africa, but also of the nature of Europe's history. In addressing Africans, Kwame Anthony Appiah, warns that "to forget Europe is to suppress the conflicts that have shaped our identities."[5] A similar warning can be found in James Baldwin's work when he writes that, whether they like it or not, Africans are "related to Europe, stained by European visions and standards . . . [in] their relations to themselves, and to each other, and to their past." What is present, albeit

4. Parsons, *System of Modern Societies* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 1.

5. Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 155 and 72.

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implicitly, in Appiah's and Baldwin's observations is the truth of the *obverse* of the admonitions addressed to Africans: "for Europe or the modern West to think itself without Africa is to suppress the conflicts that shaped and continues to shape modern and postmodern European history and identities."[6] All of this is lost when Africa is understood as Habermas does: abstractly, ahistorically and, therefore, "mythologically."

Were it not for the crucial role Africa plays in *The Theory of Communicative Action*, one would not bother to raise questions about the historical relation between Africa and Europe. Thus, one could argue that although explicit and profuse, Habermas' concern with Africa was meant, in his words, merely as "an excursus into the outer court of the theory of argumentation," and as a way to "supplement [his] provisional specification of the concept of rationality."[7] Then this concept of modern European rationality, to which Africa plays the function of an "outer" court, the role of spatial (geographical) and temporal (historical) limits, the limits of reason, is the central building block not just of a theory of argumentation but also ultimately of Habermas' understanding of communicative praxis in general. As such, Africa — already assumed not only to be outer but more crucially opposite — was brought in from the possible ends of civilization and pressed into service within the interior court of the Empire.

Why was this appeal to Africa necessary? Habermas argues as follows: "Even when we are judging the rationality of individual persons, it is not sufficient to resort to this or that expression. The question is, rather, whether A or B or a group of individuals behaves rationally *in general*; whether one may systematically expect that they have good reasons for their expressions and that these expressions are correct or successful in cognitive dimension, reliable or insightful in the moral-practical dimension, discerning or illuminating in the evaluative dimension; that they exhibit understanding in the hermeneutic dimension; or indeed whether they are 'reasonable' in all these dimensions. When there appears a systematic effect in these respects, across various domains of interaction and over long periods (perhaps even over the space of a life time), we also speak of the rationality of a *conduct of life.* And in the sociocultural conditions for such a conduct of life there is reflected perhaps the rationality of a lifeworld shared not only by individuals but by collectives as well."[8]

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6. James Baldwin, *Nobody Knows My Name: More Notes of a Native Son* (New York: Dial Press, 1961), p. 198.
7. TCAI, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
8. *Ibid.*

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It is in the attempt to show that modern Western "collective" life is not only rational but also *superior* to all others that Habermas brings in Africa — a continent whose inhabitants and worldview he suspects of being "irrational"[9] — and therefore the antithesis of the West. Through this antithesis, Habermas hopes, one would see that (a) the modern West is indeed not just "rational" but rational in the way Habermas says it is and (b) the modern Western rational worldview is superior to all others. Along this line, Habermas explains: "I shall take up the cultural interpretive systems of worldviews that reflect the background knowledge of social groups and guarantee an interconnection among the multiplicity of their action orientations. Thus I shall first inquire into the conditions that structures of action-orienting worldviews must satisfy if a rational conduct of life is to be possible for those who share such worldview. This way of proceeding offers two advantages; on the one hand, it forces us to turn from conceptual to empirical analysis and to seek out the rationality structures embodied in worldviews; and, on the other hand, it keeps us from supposing *without further ado* that the rationality structures specific to the modern understanding of the world are generally valid and forces us instead to consider them in an historical perspective."[10] "Without further ado"? How does one establish that the modern Western worldview is "rational"? How does one show that it is generally — or universally — "valid"? What does "validity" mean here, and how can one presume this "without further ado" when the very concept of "rational" and "validity" are drawn from one of the traditions under interrogation? Was the journey to the "outer court" that is Africa Habermas' short-cut to a rapid execution of a series of claims? In other words, in order to "ground" an idea of Western reason and prove its universal validity and superiority, all one has to do is take a look at *it*.[11]

9. According to Habermas: "[T]he Azande themselves experience unavoidable absurdities . . . as soon as they enter upon a stubborn consistency check such as the anthropologist undertakes. But a demand of this kind is *brought* to bear upon them; and when an anthropologist confronts them with it, they generally evade it. But isn't this refusal, this higher tolerance for contradiction, a sign of a more irrational conduct of life? Must we not call action orientations that can be stabilized only at the cost of suppressing contradictions irrational?" TCAI, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

10. TCAI, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44.

11. According to Habermas: "In attempting to elucidate the concept of rationality through appeal to the use of the expression 'rational,' *we* had to rely on a *preunderstanding* anchored in modern orientations. Hitherto we have naively presupposed that, in this modern understanding of the world, structures of consciousness are expressed that belong to a rationalized lifeworld and make possible in principle a rational conduct of life. We are implicitly connecting a *claim* to *universality* with our *Occidental understanding of the world.*" *Ibid.*, p. 44.

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In order to render more convincing this difference and superiority of the Western worldview, however, Habermas appears to have been forced to take great pains to construct, in a series of meticulous appropriations from a specific school of anthropology, an Africa that looks as antithetical to "the West" as possible. The most significant example of this strategy is clear. Notice the observation by Habermas that his approach "forces us to turn from conceptual to empirical analysis" and to adopt "an historical perspective." There is something radical about these gestures, but the radicality is not located where one might think: in Habermas' thought the adoption of the empirical attitude yields only a presentist concept of Africa,[12] while the supposedly "historical" perspective turns out to mean nothing more than a comparison between a West deemed historical and an Africa deemed ahistorical. The exercise becomes one of drawing a contrast between a "dynamic modern culture" and a "static, traditional" one, i.e., between a "rational" West and a "mythical" Africa. The shine of Europe's history, progress and modernity is set off besides the darkness of Africa's mythic mind, social staticity and "natural" backwardness.[13] The presuppositions Habermas makes for modernity, presumptions heretofore "unthematized," would be rendered crystal clear through the uses and on occasion abuses of Africa as Limit and Other unequivocally and indistinctly declared "mythical," in "sharpest contrast" and an "antithesis" to the Western world. One must wonder: to what extent is the other worldview totally "archaic" and "mythical," a "sharp contrast," "antithesis" and "outside" the court precisely because the "inner court" of an Empire wishes for a strong opponent, an "outer court" against which to work out its clearly robust claims about itself? Does Africa really exist as the 'Other' *of* the West, or does Africa's otherness, its strangeness and "natural" characteristics

12. "Presentism" here is used in the same sense Habermas applied it to some of Foucault's historiography: an analysis that "remains hermeneutically stuck at its starting point"; i.e., a historical study that takes place reductively and surreptitiously through the concerns of the present. See Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, tr. by Frederick G. Lawrence (Boston: MIT Press, 1990), pp. 276-278.

13. In Habermas' words: "In determining the significance of this claim [to universality and superiority of 'our' Occidental rationality], it would be well to draw a comparison with the *mythical* understanding of the world. In *archaic* societies myths fulfill the unifying function of worldviews in a exemplary way — they permeate life-practice. At the same time, within the cultural traditions accessible to us, they present the *sharpest contrast* to the understanding of the world dominant in modern societies. *Mythical worldviews are far from making possible rational orientations of action* in our sense. With respect to the conditions for a rational conduct of life in this sense, *they present an antithesis* to the modern understanding of the world. Thus the heretofore unthematized presuppositions of modern thought should become visible in the mirror of mythical thinking." TCAI, *op. cit.*, p. 44 (italics added).

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result from Europe's attempt to constitute and maintain its self-image and identity by fashioning, as precondition, a deserving enemy?

Habermas' "Africa"

Why and in what ways, for Habermas, must Africa function as a "mirror" (or better: the darkness against which to offset the light) of the modern West? Is "archaic" and "mythic" Africa a mirror for the West in the sense Sander Gilman explained the peculiarly German phenomenon of "Blackness without blacks,"[14] or is it of a more recent origin, as in Günter Grass' description of the presence of the Romanies and Sinti in contemporary Europe?[15] What does Habermas mean by the "mythical" in light of Adorno's and Horkheimer's understanding of mythology in their "two theses: myth is already enlightenment; and enlightenment reverts to mythology"?[16] In light of these well-known studies of the West in general or of Germany in particular, what can one make of Habermas' painstaking effort to prove that Africa is truly "mythical"? Of course, it is not surprising that when Habermas actually moves into his detailed discussion of the debates about the nature of African "mythical worldview," he relies on the later rather than an early model of Africa dominant in anthropological literature.[17]

14. Sander Gilman, *On Blackness without Black: Essays on the Image of the Black in Germany* (Boston, MA: G.K. Hall and Co., 1982).

15. "The Romanies and Sinti are the lowest of the low . . . Why? Because they are different. Because they steal, are restless, roam, have the Evil Eye and that stunning beauty that makes us ugly to ourselves. Because their mere existence puts our values into question. Because they are all very well in operas and operettas, but in reality — it sounds awful, reminds you of awfulness. . . ." See Günter Grass, "Losses," in *Granta* 42 (Winter 1992), p. 107. "Through what system of exclusion, eliminating whom, creating what division, through what workings of negation and rejection, is society able to function?" See "Michel Foucault on Attica: An Interview," in *Telos* 19 (Spring 1974), pp. 154-161.

16. Adorno and Horkheimer, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, tr. by John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1993), p. xvi. Compare Habermas' ahistoric "Africa" to Adorno's and Horkheimer's awareness of the significant and complex relations between "conflicts in the Third World," "the Nazi terror," and "the transition to the world of administered life" (Preface, p. ix). In addition to Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism*, *op. cit.*, see also Mamood Mamdani: *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996).

17. "Lévy-Bruhl's theses on the mentality of 'nature peoples' showed that we cannot postulate a 'prelogical' stage of knowing and acting for the 'savage mind' . . . Evans-Pritchard . . . confirmed the view that the differences between mythical and modern thought do not lie at the level of logical operations. The degree of rationality of worldviews evidently does not vary with the stage of cognitive development of the individuals who orient their action within them. Our point of departure has to be that adult members of primitive tribal societies can acquire basically the same formal operations as the members of modern societies, even though the higher-level competencies appear less frequently and more selectively in them; that is, they are applied in more restricted spheres of life." TCAI, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

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Instead of Lévy-Bruhl and Gobineau, Habermas relies on Evans-Pritchard and Lévy-Strauss, supplemented with the Marxist work of Godelier.

Lévy-Bruhl had argued that Africans are incapable of logical thought: instead they "know" things through mystical and magical emotions."[18] He did revise this opinion in a posthumously published diary,[19] but it was Evans-Pritchard's work that succeeded in overturning this initial image of Africans as devoid of reason and logic. Hence Habermas' position: if Evans-Pritchard's assessment of the African mind is correct ("the degree of rationality of worldviews evidently does not vary with the stage of cognitive development of the individuals who orient their action within them"), then, African rationality is only inferior, and "our" "point of departure" has to be that "the higher-level competencies appear less frequently and more selectively in them." Compare these two qualified claims teased out of and in deference to Evans-Pritchard with Habermas' original and more radical postulate: "Mythical worldviews *are far from making possible rational orientations of action*," or: "With *respect to the conditions for a rational conduct of life* in this sense, *they present an*

18. See Lucien Levy-Bruhl (1857-1939), *La mentalité primitive* and *Les fonctions mentales dans les societes inferieures.* English translations, respectively: *Primitive Mentality* and *How Natives Think*, both translations by Lilian A. Glare and published in New York by George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1923 and 1926.

19. Anticipating Habermas' conclusions at the end of his arguments with Winch, in a chapter entitled "Discussion des faits 'Afrique Occidentale Francaise' au point de vue de logique" Levy-Bruhl wrote about a native's apparent inability to acknowledge the untenability of holding simultaneously contradictory claims. On closer examination, however, he realized that the contradiction is the result of imposing an extraneous viewpoint and that, from the native's own viewpoint the approach is perfectly rational. In yet another section entitled "Abandon définitif du caractère prélogique," Levy-Bruhl, providing further details about why on this issue he decided to put "beaucoup d'eau dans [s]on vin," concluded: "Concerning the 'prelogical' character of the primitive mentality, I have already poured much water into my wine during the past twenty five years. The result that I have now regarding the matter renders definitive this evolution and forces me to abandon an original hypothesis whose basis is invalid." See *Les Carnets de Lucien Lévy-Bruhl* (Paris: Press Universitaires de France, 1949), pp. 57-58 and 60. Despite all his "closer analyses," Lévy-Bruhl's conclusions about the African mind go no further than Winch's popular position: the European anthropologist in judging the African worldview irrational commits a *category mistake.* As such, both Lévy-Bruhl's revised position and Winch's contemporary formulations remain wounded by Habermas' critique — a critique whose seeds were already discernible in Lévy-Bruhl: "Must we not call action orientations that can be stabilized only at the cost of suppressing contradiction irrational?" (or: "we must ask ourselves, in regard to the Malinki, if the logical requirements of his mind is not less exacting than ours"). Of course Lévy-Bruhl in his revision also inserted a caveat which should be important even in regard to both his and Winch's claims of "categorical" difference for the African mind: "as long as we can presume that we have the Malinki's true words: we know only what the interpreter told us." p. 57.

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antithesis to the modern understanding of the world." If these original and more radical claims are correct, and if the Azande worldview is mythical as Habermas interpreted them at this time, then the claim derived more directly from Evans-Pritchard should appear, at least from Habermas' viewpoint, as an inexplicable concession.

There are, however, other ways to make sense of this. First, there are obvious differences between the goals of Habermas' understanding of Africa and Evans-Pritchard's empirical work — differences generating different interpretations resulting in competing versions of Africa. Second, there are deep historical reasons — economic, political and cultural — that account for several shifting and competing views of Africa held by dominant European thinkers at various times, sometimes by the same thinker.

In the earliest modern encounters between European and African kingdoms, in the 15th century, recorded accounts reveal a remarkable relation of equals: exchange of diplomatic counsels were routine and glowing accounts of thriving and vibrant nations of Bini, Dahomey, Ashanti, etc., whose organizational powers and influence were favorably compared to the Roman Papacy.[20] However, with the development of American plantations Afro-European trade demands shifted from raw material to human labor. So did European characterizations of "the African" or "the Negro."[21] Africans became identified as a subhuman race and speculations about the "savage" nature of "the African mind" became entrenched within the *univers du discours* of French, Scottish and German Enlightenment thinkers.[22] Finally, when slave trade and plantation slavery declined (due to a combination of shifts in economic interests as well as in moral and political attitudes) and

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20. See, e.g., Basil Davidson's books on *Africa: History of a Continent* (New York: Macmillan, 1966; and *The African Genius: An Introduction to African Cultural and Social History* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Co., 1969).

21. See, e.g., Peter Martin, *Schwarze Teufel, edle Mohren: Afrikaner in Bewußtsein und Geschichte der Deutschen* (Hamburg: Junius, 1993); Hugh Honor, *The Representation of the Black in Western Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982); and Henry Louis Gates, "The History and Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism, 1773-1831: the Arts, Aesthetic Theory and the Nature of the African" (doctoral thesis, Cambridge University, 1978).

22. See, e.g., E. C. Eze, *Race and the Enlightenment* and *Postcolonial African Philosophy: A Critical Reader* (both from Oxford: Blackwell, 1997); Henry Louis Gates, *Race, Writing, and Difference* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986); Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998); Cornel West, *Keeping Faith: Philosophy and Race in America* (London: Routledge, 1983); Katherine Faull, *Anthropology and the German Enlightenment: Perspectives on Humanity* (London: Bucknell and Associated University Presses, 1994); Isaac Kramnik, ed., *The Portable Enlightenment Reader* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995); etc.

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the relation between Africa and Europe changed to various projects of active occupation of Africa and *in situ* administration of its populations (officially marked by the 1884 Berlin Conference), the theory of Africans shifted to accommodate this new reality: Africans are not subhuman or pre-rational, they have rational capacity, but one inferior to Europeans. This new theory fit adequately the need to train local bureaucrats and clerks, as well as the need to exploit the positions of African kings and chiefs through a system of colonial administration known variously as "indirect rule" or, in the case of the French, "association." In fact, where Africans had no monarchs, "warrant chiefs" were created to facilitate bureaucratic and colonial administration. Yet, the chief's responsibility must conform to his "mental" capacity: "selectively," and in "restricted spheres," to use Habermas' metaphors.[23] Since, theoretically, only the European District Officer or colonial administrator had the "higher level competencies," the colonial subjection of the African monarchs and warrant chiefs is thereby logically consistent and receives its practical fulfillment.[24]

Habermas' analysis of Africa must be located in this larger historical framework. He writes: "I shall begin with (A) a rough characterization of the mythical understanding of the world. For the sake of simplicity I shall confine myself to the results of Lévy-Strauss' structuralist investigations, above all to those stressed by M. Godelier. (B) Against this background the basic concepts constitutive of the modern understanding of the world, and thus intuitively familiar to us, begin to stand out. In this way we can, from a cultural-anthropological distance, link up again with the concept of rationality . . ."[25] "Africa" here means nothing but what is posited as "other" in order to be re-appropriated as the familiar. The language throughout is that of "we," "our," and "us" versus "they," "theirs" and "them." Yet the attempt is, unabashedly and throughout, to legitimate "the basic concepts constitutive of the Occidental modern understanding of the world."[26]

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23. TCAI, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-45.

24. On the various stages of European philosophical theories about the "African mind" and its correlation to pressures from economic, political and, on occasion, moral considerations, see D. Lloyd, "Race under Representation," in E. V. Daniel and J. M. Peck, eds., *Culture/Contexture* (University of CA Press, Berkeley, 1996), pp. 249-272; and Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1961).

25. TCAI, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

26. *Ibid.* V. Y. Mudimbe is justified in claiming that: "The paradox is that if, indeed, these outsiders were understood as localized and far away geographically, they were nonetheless imagined and rejected as the intimate and other side of the European-thinking subject." See V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Idea of Africa* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. xi.

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Habermas' theoretical and "empirical" accounts Africa must thus be seen in the framework of the classical problem of the dialectic of the history of the West. As dialectically other to *this* West, Africa is not truly the 'other' — because if it were, there might be nothing to say about it; it would not be known or grasped in certain ways, and, in this sense, Africa might even escape Europe. However, Africa as modern Europe knows, invents and encounters it, becomes an alterity that can be located and domesticated. It is the other in a hierarchically organized relation in which the same is what rules, names, defines and assigns "its" other.[27]

The Paradox

While holding onto his original proposition that a worldview comprises the "background knowledge" that guarantees an interconnection among the multifarious rational activities of a group,[28] Habermas presents what he calls a "rough characterization" of the African worldview; thematizes his presuppositions about modern European rationality by contrasting it with the African "mythical" mind; and highlights, against the background of African mythic worldview the claim that the modern European understanding of the world is universal. This schematization allows Habermas to assert that he has found further bases for his Comtean claims about a world-historical evolutionary process of rationalization.[29] Noting that what most characterizes the mythic worldview is the "strongly totalizing power of the savage mind,"[30] he draws the conclusion that the "savage mind" is incapable of differentiating reality into subject and object, concrete and abstract, culture and nature. The world-historical evolutionary process, however, moves in the opposite direction: rationalization.[31] "What irritates us members of a modern lifeworld is that in a mythically interpreted world

27. Hèlene Cixous and Catherine Clement, *The Newly Born Woman*, tr. by Betsy Wing (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1986), pp. 70-71.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

29. It is instructive to keep in mind Lévy-Bruhl's key theses in his *The Philosophy of Auguste Comte* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons; S. Sonnenschein & Co., 1903) as a way of making sense of the similarities (as well as differences) between Lévy-Bruhl's and Habermas' views about the Africans' "primitive mentality."

30. TCAI, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

31. "What we find most astonishing [about the 'savage mind'] is the peculiar leveling of the different domains of reality: nature and culture are projected onto the same plane. From this reciprocal assimilation of nature to culture and conversely culture to nature there results, on the one hand, a nature that is outfitted with anthropomorphic features, drawn into the communicative network of social subjects, and in this sense humanized, and on the other hand, a culture that is to a certain extent naturalized and reified and absorbed into the objective nexus of operations of anonymous power." *Ibid.*, p. 47.

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we cannot, or cannot with sufficient precision, make certain differentiations that are fundamental to our understanding of the world."[32]

The modern European mind, declared not only unmythical but also universal, faced with an African mind presumed universally mythical, experiences not only astonishment but also irritation. Why irritation? Because unlike the differentiation of social spheres that, from Hegel to Weber, have been recognized as the defining characteristics of European capitalist modernity, the unmodern African mind presents the world in "a seamless totality," a "confusion" or "a giant maze of mirrors in which the opposing images of man and world are infinitely reflected in each other."[33] As an example of this "confusion," Habermas subsumes the African conceptualization of nature under the category of spirit-energy or spirit-animation (animism) rather than causality (science).[34] While Africa is animistic, socially totalistic and alien, Europe is scientific, socially differentiated and familiar. Conceptually frozen in this polarity is an internally inadequate account of the "modern" and the "mythical," including their co-existence. Little wonder Habermas feels astonished and irritated: Africa is "confusing" and "irritating" because it is not Europe. Here then is the paradox: a modern "mythical" account of Africa.

It is not surprising that Habermas agrees with Evans-Pritchard that the difference between modern and mythic thinking is not one of logical and illogical aptitudes ("adult members of primitive tribal societies can acquire basically the same formal operations as members of modern societies, even though the higher level competencies appear less frequently and more selectively in them"[35]). Rather, the "savage" is different from the modern world-understanding because of the way the mythic mind confuses nature with culture, and culture with nature. "This associative nature of mythic understanding is diametrically opposed to the analytic sundering of objective, subjective, and social domains of reference fundamental to modern rationality."[36] Because the mythical mind is not sufficiently analytical, it is also not critical. Therefore the mythic worldview is "closed."[37]

In *The Theory of Communicative Action*, however, one feels cheated out of even a minimally adequate familiarity with Africa. Absent is any

32. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
34. David Ingram, *Habermas and the Dialectic of Reason* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 23-24.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
37. See TCAI, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-142.

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account of Africa's centuries-old and complex relations to Europe. This is the result of the fact that Habermas seems more interested in the ideological (or, as he prefers, "normative") business of "discover[ing] through the quite contrasting structures of the 'savage mind' important presuppositions of the modern understanding of the world"[38] than in Africa or Europe and their common histories. It is this "normative" interest which accounts for Habermas' relentless effort (and irritation at having) to prove that African worldview is "closed" while the European is "open."[39]

For Habermas, "closedness" means inability for critical reflectivity — unlike "openness," which allows for a critical sense making possible the progressive acquisition of (scientific and moral) knowledge.[40] From the viewpoint of understanding modern Europe or modern capitalist culture the danger and thus the regressive elements in Habermas typologies of the "modern" and the "mythical" is to suppose that the mythical is located elsewhere. How much of the modern is not only scientific and differentiated but also mythical and totalistic?[41] How much of the "mythical" worldview and its totalities are in constant and irrevocable pressure, from within and without, of disintegration and fragmentation?[42] These

38. TCA1, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

39. TCAl, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-66. The concepts of "open" and "closed" societies obviously derive from Karl Popper, who meant them to reflect the more general distinctions between "dogmatic" and "critical" attitudes. According to Popper, "an uncontrolled wish to impose regularities, a manifest pleasure in rites and in repetition as such, are characteristic of primitives and children; and increasing experience and maturity sometimes create an attitude of caution and criticism rather than of dogmatism." See *Conjectures and Refutations* (New York: Harper, 1968), p. 49. Robin Horton has deployed Popper's "open" and "closed" concepts in describing the European and the African worldviews. According to him, "traditional" Africa is a "closed" society because its forms of thought are not "modern," i.e., critical or scientific. See Robin Horton, "Tradition and Modernity Revisited," in Martin Hollis and Steven Lukes, eds., *Rationality and Relativism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), pp. 210-260). Habermas endorses a more sophisticated version of the "open/closed" dichotomy in relation to his concept of what it means to be "rational."

40. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

41. When Habermas writes that "the Azande themselves experience unavoidable absurdities . . . as soon as they enter upon a stubborn consistency check such as the anthropologist undertakes. But a demand of this kind is *brought* to bear upon them; and when an anthropologist confronts them with it, they generally evade it. But isn't this refusal, this higher tolerance for contradiction, a sign of a more irrational conduct of life? Must we not call action orientations that can be stabilized only at the cost of suppressing contradictions irrational?" (TCAl, *op. cit.*, p. 60), one is tempted to ask: why must anthropologists travel all the way to Africa to discover, and what is so remarkable about, this behavior? It seems to exist everywhere, e.g., among religious cultures and groups in Europe or elsewhere.

42. Kwasi Wiredu, "How not to Compare African Thought with Western Thought," in Emmanuel C. Eze, ed., *African Philosophy: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).

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questions do not seem very interesting to Habermas.

Working from the famous "rationality debate" between Winch and Horton about the epistemological legitimacy of Evans-Pritchard's anthropological work, in particular the classic *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*, and with an eye to proving not only the openness but also the "objectivity" and "universal" validity of the "scientific" and "modern" European rationality against the "closedness," "subjectivism" and "particularity" of Africa's "tribal" mythical mentality, Habermas argues: "Evans-Pritchard's study of witchcraft, oracles, and magic in the African tribe of the Azande is one of the best examples showing that one can exhibit a high degree of hermeneutic charity toward obscure expressions without drawing the relativistic consequences that Lukes sees connected with this manner of proceeding. I would like to open the second round with an argument from Evans-Pritchard, who clarifies the belief in witches, and thereby also the reasons for the corresponding magical practices, in such a way that his readers can recognize the coherence of the Zande worldview. At the same time, as an anthropologist he holds fast to the standards of scientific rationality when it is a question of objectively assessing the view and techniques of this tribe."[43] Or: "The charge of a category mistake raised against the European anthropologist can be understood in a strong and a weak sense. If it says merely that the scientist should not impute to the natives his own interest in resolving inconsistencies, the question naturally arises, whether this lack of a theoretical interest may not be traced back to the fact that the Zande worldview imposes less exacting standards of rationality and is in this sense less rational than the modern understanding of the world."[44] Finally: "Th[e] dimension of 'closed' *versus* 'open' seems to provide a *context independent standard for the rationality of worldviews.* Of course the point of reference is again modern science. . . ."[45] But is the allegedly "context-*in*dependent" status of modern science really a closed case?[46]

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43. TCAI, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56.
44. TCAI, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
45. TCAI, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
46. See, e.g., Andrew Pickering, ed., *Science as Social Practice* (Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 1992); Sandra Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986); John Dupre, *The Disorder of Things: Metaphysical Foundations for the Disunity of Science* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Bruno Latour, *The Pasteurization of France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989); etc.

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At any rate, whichever way one looks at the matter, there is no doubt that, for Habermas, Africa is the place with an inferior form of rationality that, as he claims, pretends to be universal. Unlike the scientific universality of Western reason, however, Africa's is a universal presence of "myth" and an equally universal absence of "science." The difficulty here, as elsewhere, is to presume that everyone or every culture in the Western world is "scientifically" rational. Just as all Western minds do not think scientifically, it would be an equal error to suppose that all Africans must have a scientific mind in order to qualify as "truly" rational.[47]

To the extent that the terms of his binary constructions allow, Habermas does entertain the thought that just because he thinks the mythic worldview is "closed" and the modern scientific worldview is "open" does not necessarily prove the *truth* of his *presuppositions* about the modern worldview.[48] He also raised what he considered "the fundamental question," i.e., the potential circularity of a desire to validate one's very own system of validation: "whether and in what respect the standards of rationality by which the investigator was himself at least intuitively guided might claim universal validity."[49] Finally, Habermas invites one to consider an issue involved in Winch's critique of Evans-Pritchard in particular, and certain traditions of Western anthropology in general: whether "Winch's misgivings concerning the hypostatization of scientific rationality can be rendered intelligible and at the same time freed from precipitate conclusions. Scientific rationality belongs to a complex of cognitive-instrumental rationality that can certainly claim validity beyond the context of particular cultures. Nevertheless, after Winch's arguments have been examined and defused, something of his pathos survives, to which we have not given its due . . . Can't we who belong to modern societies learn something from understanding alternative, particularly premodern forms of life? Shouldn't we go, beyond all romanticizing of superseded stages of development, beyond exotic stimulation from the contents of alien cultures, and recall the losses required by our own path to the modern world?"[50]

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47. For a refreshing cross-cultural insights into the status of "science" or scientific knowledge in traditional Africa, see for example: Supo Ogunbunmi and Henry M. Olaitan, "Elements of Physics in Yoruba Culture — I" and "Elements of Physics in Yoruba Culture — II" both in Eze, *African Philosophy: An Anthology*, *op. cit.*, Chapter 19.

48. As he put it: "Of course, this does not yet prove that the supposed rationality expressed in our understanding of the world is more than a reflection of the particular features of (our) culture." *Ibid.*, p. 53.

49. *Ibid.*

50. TCAI, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

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Well intended as this openness may be, the argument surrounding and constraining it highlights a problem: why must "alternative" forms of life in "outside" cultures be invariably defined as "pre-" modern? Could this form of life be anything other than what must always be already haunted, bounded and contained by Europe's historical particularity expressed in a specific modernity? Next, how about the talk of "superseded stages of development": How should one understand this? In what (metaphorical) senses has Europe "superseded" the "stage" of Africa's existence? Are there "modern" features of Africa? Has Europe today exhausted its Africa-like "pre-" or, better yet, un-modern features? How could one find appropriate answers to these questions "normatively," without recourse to actual histories of both Africa and Europe, and their relations? Has the West "lost," and therefore must now content itself to "recall," the mythical qualities of its worldview — even as regards religion, gender, race or any number of aspects of the West's relations to itself and others?

Despite all the nods and dues he pays to opposing arguments ("this does not *yet* prove. . . ."[51]) and all concessions and qualifications, and because of declared intentions short of a serious and open-ended cross-cultural analysis, the thrust of Habermas' argument remains to "defuse" and "free" Winch's arguments in such a way that, to borrow Castoriadis' words, the "West" can go on "judging as beautiful what has already been so judged":[52] "Winch's arguments are too weak to uphold the thesis that inherent to every linguistically articulated worldview and to every cultural form of life there is an incommensurable concept of rationality; but his strategy of argumentation is strong enough to set off justified claim to universality on behalf of the rationality that gained expression in the modern understanding of the world. . . ."[53]

Even if one were to ignore the problems with an "incommensurable concept of rationality,"[54] one interesting question arises: if, as Habermas does in deference to the strength of the "pathos" of Winch's arguments, one subtracted from the modern European worldview its "fix[ation] on knowing and mastering external nature" — a fixation Habermas acknowledges is shared by African and other cultures — then what is special about

51. TCA1, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

52. Cornelius Castoriadis, *Philosophy, Politics, and Autonomy*, ed. by David A. Curtis (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 95.

53. TCAl, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

54. See, e.g., Donald Davidson's "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme" as well as other essays collected in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

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Habermas' "normative" defense of the "inner courts" of the empire, or the singular "universality" of a supposedly "unique" Western rationality? In other words, if one grants that "Scientific rationality belongs to a complex of cognitive-instrumental rationality that can certainly claim validity beyond the context of particular cultures," then all cultures can be seen as having some "complex of cognitive-instrumental rationality." This does not imply that the specifically European expressions of this rationality is also an attribute that all societies must have in order to be "developed," "civilized" or adequately "rational." In other words, what Habermas is really saying is that in order to be considered developed, civilized and sufficiently rational, one must not only become modern but also *Western*.

So What?

Habermas' recognition that European modernity's "self-interpretation" since Descartes may be "uncritically fixed" on "knowing and mastering external nature," i.e., on knowledge/power, is an interesting gesture, for it allows one to re-open the question of whether the "universality" of modernity must always express itself as will to power. In addition to the fact that "scientific rationality . . . can certainly claim validity beyond the context of a particular culture," in what ways have the uncritical practices of modern science also distorted not only Europe's self-understanding but also its ability to "understand" non-European peoples? The "force" of an argument, scientific or otherwise, is often strengthened by the assumption of a *will* to truth. Habermas' dichotomies of modern/premodern, Europe/Africa, science/myth reveal this will which, much like the mythical mind, works in a carefully orchestrated polarity consumed in a longing for the "universal" and the "normative," but with little regard to *actual* histories of peoples in Africa or most of the world.

Thus, it is not unreasonable to expect that Habermas would acknowledge many works (including Horton's on which Habermas' arguments about the Azande stand or fall) demonstrating the falsity and unfairness of regarding "traditional" African societies as "closed." Wolé Soyinka argues that rather than closed, the worldview of native African societies are "accommodative," "elastic" and open-ended in terms of this ability to incorporate novel experiences or alternative forms of life. While admitting the "assimilative" aspect usually noted in African traditions, Soyinka draws careful distinctions: "The African worldview is not . . . stagnant. This may seem a surprising assertion to those who consider that the kind of society which has emerged from the [discussion of the 'assimilative

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wisdom of African metaphysics'] fits rather disturbingly into Karl Popper's primitive blueprint for the modern totalitarian society. Popper's uneven knowledge of the societies which he attempts to ease into his specially constructed closed circle has of course been remarked by several of his critics. His fundamental assumptions are inaccurate."[55] Likewise Barry Hallen and J. O. Sodipo show how inattentive to empirical data were both Evans-Pritchard's and Horton's earlier declarations that the African mind is unreflective, uncritical and therefore incapable of appreciating alternative theories or interpretations. Dorothy Emmet writes that through "examination of the uses of *mo* and *gbagbo*" Hallen and Sodipo "bring out what might be called a Yoruba epistemology more sophisticated than is generally acknowledged in anthropological literature." Whereas "Oral tradition is second hand information which gives things 'one agrees to accept' — this is a better translation of *gbagbo* than 'belief' *mo* — knowledge — is something one knows first hand . . . . The study of usages of these particular words show how the Yoruba *onisegun* are more sophisticated epistemologically, and more critically, and indeed, empirically minded than has been generally presupposed."[56]

Finally, while distancing himself from those claiming that African traditions are "closed," Appiah explains: "It is . . . possible to find first rate speculative thinkers in traditional societies whose individual openness is not to be denied. I think here of Ogotemmeli [while] Barry Hallen has provided evidence from Nigerian sources of the existence, within African *traditional modes of thought,* of *styles of reasoning* that are open. . . ."[57] Appiah's emphasis on "traditional modes of thought" or "styles of reasoning" is rather different from Habermas' idea that "higher level competencies" are exceptional in Africa. After all, are scientific or

55. Wolé Soyinka, *Myth, Literature and the African World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 48 and 53. Popper's assumptions are "inaccurate" because "they bypass the code on which [the African] worldview is based, the continuing evolution of tribal wisdom through an acceptance of the elastic nature of knowledge. European scholars have always betrayed a tendency to accept the myth, the lore, the social technique of imparting knowledge or of stabilizing society as evidence of orthodox rigidity. Yet the opposite, an attitude of philosophical accommodation, is constantly demonstrated . . . . This principle creates for society a non-doctrinaire mould of constant awareness, one which stays outside the monopolistic orbit of the priesthood, outside any claims to gnostic secrets by special cults. Interpretation, as it does universally, rests mostly in the hands of such intermediaries, but rarely with the dogmatic finality of Christianity or Islam." *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

56. Barry Hallen and J. O. Sodipo, *Knowledge, Belief and Witchcraft; Analytic Experiments in African Philosophy* (London: Ethnographica, 1986), p. 2. A revised edition of this classic, with a Preface by Quine, has been issued by Stanford University Press (1997).

57. Appiah, *In My Father's House*, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

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philosophical styles of reasoning the most common denominator in *any* culture? As Hallen notes, among professional groups *onisegun* sophisticated styles of reasoning meet standards that qualify their work in both method and substance as critical and reflective.[58] How else could this be when the *onisegun* is comprised of the professional guild of educated "scientists" and "philosophers," some of whose reputed acumen are widespread not only throughout the coast of West Africa but also in Cuba and Brazil?[59]

More relevant in the present context, however, is that Horton himself has revised his own studies of traditional thought in Africa. "Horton . . . discusses work by students of Evans-Pritchard's that not only addresses the kind of static body of belief that is captured in Evans-Pritchard's picture of the Azande thought world but also stresses the dynamic and — as Horton admits — 'open' way in which they 'devise explanations for novel elements in . . . experience,' and 'their capacity to borrow, re-work and integrate alien ideas in the course of elaborating such explanations,' 'Indeed' he continues, 'It is this open-ness that has given the traditional cosmologies such tremendous durability in the face of immense changes that the 20th century has brought to the African scene'."[60]

Unfortunately, few classical anthropologists — and yet fewer philosophers who depend on them — were interested in investigating either how the "immense changes" of the 20th or earlier centuries transformed and continue to transform Africa from the outside, or the relentless inconsistencies, turmoil and diversity that, from the inside, always mark life and culture on the continent. None of these images of historical change and diversity would fit the monolithic image of an "archaic" Dark Continent. In fact, evidence provided by practicing historians are at odds with the Western anthropologist's or philosopher's initial view of Africa. As Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch notes: "West Africa . . . had been seething with activity even since the eighteenth-century waves of Fulani conquest and well

58. Appiah points to the significance of the fact that Hallen chose as evaluative criteria "Karl Popper's characterization of critical reflection," "a gesture all the more significant given the Popperian provenance of the open-closed dichotomy." Thus: "(a) identifying the tradition as tradition; (b) displaying an awareness of its consequences; and (c) being aware of at least one alternative and, on some critical basis, choosing to affirm or reject it." By these criteria "the *babakwo* — the diviner and healer — whom Hallen cites, *is* critically appreciative of the tradition he lives in." See Appiah, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

59. The work of the *Onisegun* in the West of Nigeria could easily be compared to that of their counterpart in the Eastern part of the country: the *Nri* dynasty. See also Claude Sumner's edition of Zera Yecob, *The Treatise*, 5 vols. (Addis Ababa: Central Printing Press, 1974-1982). Zera Yecob was a 16th century Abyssinian philosopher.

60. Appiah, *In My Father's House*, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-127.

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before the creation of units of resistance to European influence. . . . The Congolese basin was the site of still more profound upheavals linked to commercial penetration. In such cases the revolution in production rocked the very foundations of the political structure. As for South Africa, the rise of the Zulus and their expansion had repercussions up into central Africa. How far back do we have to go to find the stability alleged to be 'characteristic' of the precolonial period: before the Portuguese conquest, before the Islamic invasion, before the Bantu expansion? Each of these great turning points marked reversal of long-trends, within which a whole series of shorter cycles might in turn be identified, as, for example, the succession of Sudanic empires, or even such shorter cycles as the periods of recessions (1724-1740, 1767-1782, 1795-1811, and so on) and the upswing of the slave-trade economy of Dahomey. In short, the static concept of 'traditional' society cannot withstand the historian's analysis."[61]

In a similar vein, Wyatt MacGaffey states: "Part of the nineteenth century sense of 'tribe' derived from a scheme of social evolution in which primitive societies were thought to advance from the leaderless 'band' organization characteristic of hunters and gatherers to a 'tribal' stage initiated by the acquisition of metal-working skills and eventually to 'civilization' and the nation-state; in other words, primitive peoples were expected to evolve into Europeans, or at least into conformity with models Europeans entertained until recently. The historical development of Kongo from kingdom to village, however, ran counter to this social evolutionary expectations."[62] From Wyatt's work it would appear the least surprising that Habermas' "Africa" fits into a specific "social evolutionary expectation" — for this is a consequential expectation within the ordinarily optimistic Piagetan framework of Habermas' theory of society and history. More problematic is the fact that, unlike McGaffey's commentary, it is not clear from *The Theory of Communicative Action* that the expectation that "primitive peoples . . . evolve into Europeans, or at least into conformity" with Europe's model of life is no longer entertained.[63]

Although Habermas claims that his evolutionary perspective "by no means implies that the development of worldviews must have taken place

61. Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, "The Political Economy of the African Peasantry and Modes of Production," in Peter C. W. Gutkind and Immanuel Wallerstein, eds., *The Political Economy of Contemporary Africa*, tr. by Jeane Mayo (Beverly Hill, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1976), pp. 94-116; quote from p. 91.

62. Wyatt MacGaffey, "Congo Identity 1483-1993," in *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol. 94, No. 4 (Fall 1995), p. 1029.

63. See for example, TCAI, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-74.

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in a continuous or linear way, or that it was necessary in the sense of an idealistic causality," he nevertheless maintains that "we would have to assume that the scientist who belongs to a modern society could not seriously understand the Zande belief in witches, or even the crucifixion of Jesus, unless he had . . . reconstructed those learning processes that made possible the transition from myth to world religion or the transition from a religious-metaphysical worldview to the modern." Furthermore: "As is well known, Piaget distinguishes among stages of cognitive development that are characterized not in terms of new contents but in terms of structurally described levels of learning ability. The caesurae between the mythical, religious-metaphysical, and modern modes of thought are characterized by changes in the system of basic concepts. With the transition to a new stage the interpretations of the superseded stage are, no matter what their content, *categorically devalued.* It is not this or that reason, but the *kind* of reason, which is no longer convincing. A devaluation of the explanatory and justificatory potential of entire traditions took place in the great civilizations with the dissolution of mythological-narrative figures of thought, in the modern age with the dissolution of religious, cosmological, and metaphysical figures of thought. These *devaluative shifts* appear to be connected with socio-evolutionary transitions to new levels of learning, with which the condition of possible learning processes in the dimensions of the objectivating thought, moral-practical insight, and aesthetic-expressive capacity are altered."[64]

It is hard to dispute the qualitative transformations in historical consciousness embodied in the various (historical) conditions Habermas wishes to capture under the labels "mythical," "religio-metaphysical," and "modern." But it is harder yet to explain why these shifts must be characterized as *devaluative*. This negative (and less than critical) attitude towards anything considered less than modern and, broadly speaking, culturally "scientific," points to a shortcoming in Habermas' formalistic concept of reason: it is a highly cognitive but historically impoverished concept whose atrophic nature has often been pointed out. Thus, Joel Whitebook describes this as an impoverishment of the "utopic" and of the "imaginary" which can be traced to Habermas' abandonment of psychoanalytically informed understanding of reason in favor of a Piaget-Kohlberg inspired notion of evolutionary "learning processes" supposedly always effective in devaluing and "superseding" earlier stages of

64. For a detailed discussion of the deep evolutionary perspective in Habermas' social theory — including its conceptual and historical problems — see Ingram, *op. cit.*

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consciousness.[65] In a footnote addressing the problems with Habermas' (evolutionary) views about Africa, Whitebook instructively added: "One symptom of this atrophy of the political imagination is a comment that has surfaced regularly since 1989, representing Taiwan as our ideal polis. In fact, it has been suggested that a desirable outcome for eastern Europe and the Middle East [not to speak of Africa] would be a society resembling this technocapitalist wasteland." If Habermas has any sympathy for the argument that such a "technocapitalist wasteland" is less than desirable, then one might ask whether his "thin" theory of modern reason is adequate to provide what Whitebook calls a "vision" to inform a different world.

The pertinence of this type of critiques can be seen in Habermas' tentative tone in characterizing his evolutionary schema: the "devaluative shifts *appear* . . . ."; "we would have to *assume* . . . ."; etc. On account of this — and accepting Habermas' claim that historical evolution may not be continuous or linear — it is crucial to understand Africa's past and present conditions *historically:* if McGaffey's studies show that "the historical development of Kongo" was indeed "from kingdom to village" (via a series of shifts and turbulence), then this ought to raise questions about expectations that someday, somehow, Africa, on its "natural" or forced evolutionary trajectory, shall "evolve" into another modern Europe following European paths. Wyatt's account of the history of Congo indicates why it may not be always wrong to see some parts of Africa as "closed" societies. Whether they are Coquery-Vidrovitch's "internal cycles" or Wyatt's colonial irruptions, one can see how these events and their consequences would result in various levels of achievement that can render a society free, open and progressive or, in the case of failure, backward, repressive and closed. It is in this sense that Peter Amato's insight may be

65. According to Whitebook: "Habermas's general domestication of Critical Theory is duplicated in his deracination of what was perhaps Freud's most subversive discovery, the unconscious — or the psychic imaginary. . . . An emphatic notion of the unconscious constituted an encumbrance to Habermas's program in two respects. First, . . . a non-linguistic or prelinguistic unconscious, which Freud went so far as to call 'the core of our being,' would constitute an obstacle to Habermas's linguistifing program. . . . moreover, . . . Habermas's later move from psychoanalysis to the nondynamic, cognitivist learning theory of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg was already anticipated by the evisceration of the unconscious in *Knowledge and Human Interests.* Second, insofar as Habermas sought to correct the thoroughgoing antiprogressivism of Horkheimer and Adorno by elucidating the advances of modernity, the unconscious, in all its admittedly unsettling regressiveness, presented a problem for this program as well. . . . Habermas believed that [Piaget's and Kohlberg's] formal learning schemes would enable him to demonstrate the sort of progress he was seeking." See Joel Whitebook, *Perversion and Utopia: A Study of Psychoanalysis and Critical Theory* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995), pp. 7-8.

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on the mark: "The traditional open/close, civilized/primitive dichotomies express the economic and political reality that the West has *closed* African societies. Where it has not yet destroyed them, it has spent several hundred years attempting to wipe out what has remained of their cultural values, in order to substitute its own. It has regarded *their traditional authorities* as its enemy, since these have been merely an uncomfortable obstacle to *its own* authorities, which has been understood as carrying forward the inevitable march of universal human history."[66] Both Amato and Habermas thus agree that Europe has indeed "devalued" Africa. Hence it makes sense to assign "closed" designations to specific parts of Africa or some features of African social life at a particular time. Yet, one must ask how "natural" are these conditions, whether in "pre-" or "post-"colonial Africa.

Conclusion

Are certain uses of Africa by theorists of communicative action similar to Freud's uses of ethnographic material in *Totem and Taboo*? Like psychoanalysis, the theory of communicative action would be "condemned to have recourse to an ethnology that is fanciful, at times fantastic, and in any event always second hand."[67] The banality of this observation should not distract from its seriousness and novelty. As Nietzsche admitted: "Every society has a tendency to degrade its adversaries till they appear only as a caricature."[68] If what is at stake for Habermas is Europe's self-understanding, then it is unimaginable how this can occur without a non-mythical understanding of not only Africa but also other non-European parts of the world and their relations to "the West" — relations out of which modern Europe constituted and continues to constitute its self-image. In a Postcolonial Age where issues of "diversity" and "globalization" continue to demand a rethinking of old assumptions, it may well be that "when we discover that there are several cultures instead of just one and consequently at

66. Peter Amato, "African Philosophy and Modernity," in Eze, *Postcolonial African Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, Chapter 3. MacGaffey's work complements Amato's: "In the context of colonial occupation, 'tribe' effectively meant a social unit that lent itself to convenient administration, or (from the point of view of missionaries) to convenient evangelization. Intended to be a province of a modern state, namely, a colony, the tribe was thus obliged to demonstrate some of the characteristics of the state, though not of course its "modernity." It supposedly had boundaries marking it off from other tribes, as well as central administration that made it theoretically possible for the newly arrived district commissioner to say: 'Take me to your chief'." MacGaffey, "Congo Identity," *op. cit.*, p. 1030.

67. Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy*, tr. by Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 188.

68. Quoted in Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of Disaster*, tr. by Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), p. 122.

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the time when we acknowledge the end of a sort of cultural monopoly, be it illusory or real, we are threatened with destruction by our own discovery. Suddenly it becomes possible that there are just *others,* that we ourselves are an "other" among others."[69] Why is such a discovery a threat?

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69. Paul Ricoeur, *History and Truth* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965), p. 278. Elaborating on the nature of the "threat" of this "discovery," Ricoeur continues: "All meaning and every goal having disappeared, it becomes possible to wander through civilizations as if through vestiges and ruins." Compare Ricoeur's anguished tone with the following: "The concept of difference . . . seeks to undo hierarchies and creates possibilities for cultures and nations that are diverse in origin, customs, religion and race to work together. The notion of difference is opposed to imperialist and colonialist structures created by universalist views of the world." Manthia Diawara, "Interview with V. Y. Mudimbe," in Mudimbe, ed., *The Surreptitious Speech:* Presence Africaine *and the Politics of Otherness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 384.

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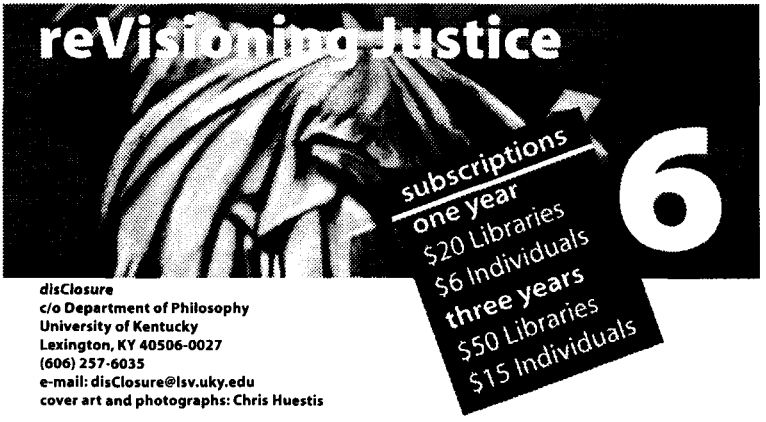

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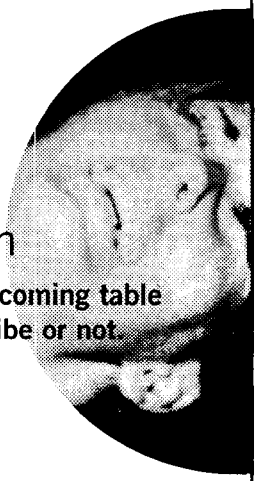

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The Reform Party and the Crisis of Canadian Politics

Mark Wegierski

In the 1990s a rise of populist or regionalist parties in Western democracies has challenged the ruling centrist consensus.[1] There are, however, only a few similarities between them. Thus it is impossible to equate, e.g., Austria's Jörg Haider or France's Jean-Marie Le Pen with Canada's Preston Manning. Diverse political cultures produce different political figures, programs and ideologies. When all is said and done, Manning's Reform Party remains idiosyncratically Canadian, and it is necessary to examine the Canadian context within which it arose in order to understand it. Generally speaking, the Reform Party offers little to traditionalists, while its "populism" often amounts to a "pseudo-revolt" — something related to the confrontation-avoiding personality of its leader.[2] So the

1. Examples of this are: the Lega Nord and National Alliance in Italy; Le Pen's Front National and de Villiers' movement in France; Jörg Haider's Freedom Party in Austria; the Flemish autonomist movement in Belgium; Patrick Buchanan's and Ross Perot's "insurgency-candidacies" in the US. Left variants of this phenomenon are the Scottish and Welsh nationalist parties in Great Britain, and the Catalan autonomists in Spain.

2. On the Reform Party, see Tom Flanagan's *Waiting for the Wave: The Reform Party and Preston Manning* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1995). Unlike works such as those of Murray Dobbin, *Preston Manning and the Reform Party* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1991), Sydney Sharpe and Don Braide, *Storming Babylon: Preston Manning and the Rise of the Reform Party* (Toronto: Key Porter, 1992), and Trevor Harrison, *Of Passionate Intensity: Right-Wing Populism and the Reform Party of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), which provide various "demonological" readings of Manning, Flanagan analyzes Manning's extreme apolitical character, resulting from Manning's early involvement with managerial "systems analysis." This approach overemphasizes the importance of economics and technology (the quantitative) at the expense of politics and ideology (the qualitative). It assumes that if people talk long enough, they eventually reach a consensus by realizing their true interests. Not coincidentally, Manning has been charged with having "the soul of an accountant."

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Reform Party's impact on Canadian politics is not likely to be very significant, unless there is a whole series of developments based on circumstances largely beyond its control.

In the 20th century traditionalism has been largely delegitimated from political life in many Western countries, including Canada. The ideological aftermath of WWII became dominated by a progressivism which, despite the fact that many traditionalists, nationalists and conservatives had opposed Nazism as strongly as any other group, marginalized all traditional thought by associating it with Nazism.[3] The "democratic Right" degenerated into an oxymoron and social conservatives became suspect. From a formal system for choosing among a variety of political options, democracy turned into a "professed faith" — a system of "democratic values." In other words, it became identified with Left-liberal ideology. This term, however, is ambiguous, since it describes a broad political spectrum including both the Left and liberalism. It never fully identifies with either side. Left-liberals are never so far Left that they would abandon social liberalism and individualism. Thus the obvious social conservatism of "really existing socialism" is repugnant to Left-liberals, who at the same time are never so liberal as to allow too much freedom of speech. For all their celebration of extreme social lifestyles, they also buy into "political correctness"[4] and support administratively-mandated suppression of ideas and ways of life they find "hateful" or inegalitarian. Not surprisingly, today "hate" has become a political weapon with which Left-liberals can effectively shut down real democratic debate and penalize their political opponents.

In societies like Canada, there is little genuine political choice. This means there is hardly any chance for traditionalist parties coming to power, subject as they are to powerful and virtually uninterrupted juridical, political, social, and cultural pressure from the New Class, managerial-therapeutic regime. The presence of powerful interests, such as "public sector white collar unions," results in the "preempting" of any genuine political

3. See William Pfaff, who in *The Wrath of Nations: Civilization and the Furies of Nationalism* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), p. 77, argues that "the fundamental political force mobilizing resistance to Hitler was nationalism" — particularly in Britain, France and Poland. Thus both Churchill and de Gaulle were staunch conservatives.

4. The "political correctness" debate began with Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987) and Dinesh D'Souza's *Illiberal Education* (New York: Free Press, 1991). See also Les Csorba III, *Academic License: The War on Academic Freedom* (New York: UCA Books, 1991); David Thibodaux, *Political Correctness: The Cloning of the American Mind* (Lafayette, LA: Huntington House, 1992); and Michael Keefer, *Lunar Perspectives: Field Notes from the Culture Wars* (Concord, Ontario: Anansi, 1996).

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discourse.[5] As a result of the Left-liberal leanings of the mass-media[6] and the mass-education system, as well as the judicial usurpation of political power by legislating through the deployment of broadly-interpreted civil and human rights,[7] traditionalist impulses are systematically edited out of social reality. This has been facilitated after the 1960s by the emergence of new technological means (television, computers, the Internet, etc.). Today, youth is engulfed by an all-pervasive pop-culture which, if not outrightly Left-liberal, obliterates whatever residual traditional beliefs they may still have. Consequently, they are intellectually, morally and culturally deracinated and, at best, able only to ferret out whatever kind of "political incorrectness" they run into. This state of affairs would have been inconceivable in earlier societies. It is as if, in exchange for the promise of sexual freedom and economic affluence, most people have willingly capitulated to the minoritarian interests of the managerial-therapeutic regime.

The Old (pre-1960) Left would have found Left-liberal concerns puzzling, incoherent or simply repugnant. Having effectively defeated big-business and the upper classes, the lower-middle and working classes are now confronted by a new alliance[8] of the managerial-therapeutic state, new

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5. The opposition to Mike Harris' Progressive Conservative majority government in Ontario, mostly by the public sector unions and their various networks of support, shows how little a right-wing government can accomplish. While they may win elections, only in rare cases can they effectively exercise any real power.

6. See S. Robert Lichter, Linda S. Richter and Stanley Rothman, *Watching America* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1991); Michael Medved's *Hollywood vs. America* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992); and Richard Grenier, *Capturing the Culture: Film, Art, and Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1991).

7. See Robert H. Bork's *Slouching Towards Gomorrah: Modern Liberalism and American Decline* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996). When, however, Richard John Neuhaus and the Editorial Board of *First Things* sought to carry the critique further (in their November 1996 issue) they met savage attacks from neoconservatives. See Mitchell S. Muncy, ed., *The End of Democracy?: The Judicial Usurpation of Politics: The Celebrated "First Things" Debate with Arguments Pro and Con and "The Anatomy of a Controversy" by Richard John Neuhaus* (Dallas, Texas: Spence Publishing, 1997).

8. Before 1970, visible minorities in Canada were a miniscule percentage of the population, and there was no history of slavery. Yet, through high immigration policies and an aggressive multiculturalism, Canada has managed to replicate the tragic US experience with ever-growing visible minority groups. See Peter Brimelow, *Alien Nation: Common Sense About America's Immigration Disaster* (New York: Random House, 1995); and Roy Beck, *The Case Against Immigration* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996). As Frantz Fanon suggested in *The Wretched of the Earth*, in the face of rising affluence and "embourgeoification" in the West, the goal of the Left becomes to create a new proletariat out of marginalized groups: people of color, homosexuals, criminals, the mentally ill and other "outcasts." On the human costs of this kind of radicalism, see Myron Magnet, *The Dream and the Nightmare: The Sixties' Legacy to the Underclass* (New York: William Morrow, 1993).

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visible minorities and other "outcast" groups. The indictment of supposedly all-powerful corporations and their budget-cutting agenda is often used to demonstrate the overwhelmingly conservative nature of Canadian society today.[9] But corporations are nothing more than the "managerial Right" which, along with the "therapeutic Left," constitute the interlocking grid of the current regime. The "Left" side of the managerial-therapeutic regime needs a "Right" counterpart: a technocratic, rational, consumptionist and "wealth-producing" half. Today, economic globalization is as inescapable as the all-pervasive pop culture. What is missing is a grounded lifeworld able to generate personal identity and meaningful public discourse. Such a lifeworld is only possible if constituted also by traditions and customs, in addition to commodities, abstract consumerism and New Class ideology.

This is why politics in the late 20th century is no longer characterized by a confrontation between a well-defined Left and an equally coherent Right, but by managerial-therapeutic regimes at war with traditionalist residues. Today, the most advanced form of the managerial-therapeutic regime is to be found in Canada where, understandably, opposition to such a regime is probably weaker than anywhere else, to the point that whatever opposition there is tends to be contaminated by the predominant managerial/therapeutic ideology.[10] This may be due to the fact that there is no one Canadian ethnic nation coterminous with the Canadian state. Canada consists of two main ethnic groups, English and French (Quebec). Canada's destiny has been shaped by the interaction between the two — one regionally-divided, heterogeneous and often amorphous, the other hard, compact and self-conscious. What has happened is that, while remaining a traditional, organic society since Confederation (1867), French Quebec has traditionally supported the Liberal Party, thus allowing the Liberals to hold power almost continuously since 1896.

Canada's identity is fractured. A huge amount of political energy is expended to "keep Quebec in Canada." English Canada is itself heterogeneous, with at least three distinct regional cultures — the Maritimes (Atlantic Canada), Ontario, and Western Canada. English-Canadian identity was

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9. See John Ralston Saul, *The Unconscious Civilization* (Concord, Ontario: Anansi, 1996).

10. For critiques of the managerial-therapeutic regime in Canada, see Peter Brimelow, *The Patriot Game* (Toronto: Key Porter, 1986); William D. Gairdner, *The Trouble with Canada* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1990); *The War Against the Family* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1992), and *On Higher Ground: Reclaiming a Civil Society* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1996); as well as Kenneth McDonald, *His Pride, Our Fall: Recovering from the Trudeau Revolution* (Toronto: Key Porter, 1995).

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never very robust, and has gradually atrophied since the 1960s.[11] With the worldwide decline of "Britishness" after 1945, English Canadians have been left with very little. Even at its acme, Canadian core traditions were arid, consisting mostly of Lowland-Scots-Presbysterianism, Calvinist in religion and Whig in politics, and never able to coalesce into any solid sense of identity. Canadians at the time were stolid, unimaginative and dull. Some historians have argued that the founding tradition of Canada was actually 19th century "reformism," or "radical liberalism," rather than the high-Toryism dating back to the United Empire Loyalists. The former is especially inhospitable to any deeply-rooted, collective identity.

The regionalism and heterogeneity of English Canada has also contributed to preventing the development of a coherent identity. The federal election of June 2, 1997 best exemplified the regionalized nature of Canada today. Out of a total of 301 seats, the Liberals won 155 seats (including 101 of 103 seats in Ontario). The Reform Party won 60 seats, all of them from Western Canada. The Bloc Québécois won 44 seats, all in Quebec. The social democrats (New Democratic Party) (21 seats) and the traditional center-right party (the Progressive Conservatives) (20 seats) received most of their support from Atlantic Canada. The difficulties of a traditionalist English-Canadian electoral victory ever emerging were highlighted by the Reform Party's failure to make any inroads in Ontario during that election. The harsh mathematics are that, with Quebec's representation amounting to a quarter of the seats in the federal Parliament, a party based solely in English Canada (ironically referred to as TROC — The Rest Of Canada) would have to win two-thirds of the seats there to form a majority government — an almost impossible feat.

Unlike the US, with its various regional urban centers, there are really only three large urban areas in Canada: Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. Of these, Toronto (now expanded into the Greater Toronto Area — GTA), with a population approaching four million, is the country's node, holding enormous social, political and economic power. The picture of Canada as an extremely multicultural and liberal country is projected almost exclusively by Toronto — the main destination of new immigrants as well as a major

11. The number of regional cultures is actually greater. Newfoundland is different from other Maritime provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island). There are significant differences between British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Yukon and North-West Territories. A geographically vast, but sparsely populated, semisovereign Inuit territory, Nunavut, has also been recently created in the Far North. See Ray Conlogue, *Impossible Nation: The Longing for Homeland in Canada and Quebec* (Stratford, Ontario: Mercury Press, 1996).

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North American metropolis. All kinds of new lifestyles and activities rarely encountered outside of Toronto (or Vancouver) dominate the ambience of the city and are projected by the media into an allegedly benighted heartland.

Until 1982 (when the Charter of Rights and Freedoms was embedded in the Constitution), Canada operated under a system of parliamentary sovereignty. This meant that a majority in Parliament could do virtually anything it wanted, unless threatened with the loss of the next elections. Through a combination of circumstances (not the least being the faithful support of Quebec), Liberals were able to remain in power from 1963 to 1984 (except for a few brief months in 1979-1980). This power was used by Prime Ministers Pearson and then Trudeau (often with the support of the New Democratic Party) to thoroughly reconstruct Canada.[12] Near the end of his tenure, Trudeau institutionalized the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which drastically limited the power of Parliament in favor of the unelected judiciary. The Charter effectively "froze" Left-liberalism in place as the reigning ideology of Canada, regardless of any future elections.[13]

By the time the tide finally turned against the Liberals in 1984, the country had been fundamentally transformed and Progressive Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney could only behave as a liberal in virtually everything he did. In 1987, the growing dissatisfaction with Mulroney among conservatives, along with the always simmering Western Canadian alienation, led Preston Manning to believe that the time was ripe for forming a new federal party. Initially it was to be merely a Western Canadian party. By 1993, however, in the teeth of widespread media condemnation, it became a significant federal force. In the October 25, 1993 federal election, Reform won 52 seats. The Progressive Conservatives, who had won large majorities in the 1984 and 1988 elections, were reduced to just two seats. The New Democratic Party won 9 seats. Running for the first time at the federal level, the Quebec separatists of the Bloc Québécois won 54 of 75 seats in Quebec, thus winning "Official Opposition" status. Thus, in March 1996, the Progressive Conservatives were about to disappear, to be replaced by the Reform Party. The latter, however, marched right into an ambush set by the Liberals over the gay rights issue. The media went wild over some unguarded comments by a Reform MP, and a small group of so-called moderate MPs in the Reform Party criticized its "unacceptable

12. See McDonald, *op. cit.*

13. In addition, there is not one conservative on the Canadian Supreme Court, which means that legislating on the basis of the rights guaranteed by the Charter is becoming ever more widespread and predominant.

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extremism."[14] The Reform Party's alleged "bigotry" became fixed in many people's minds and there was a significant rise in Progressive Conservative support among the broader center-right electorate.

In the 1997 election, the Reform Party was able to strengthen its base in Western Canada (where it garnered 60 of the 91 seats) and it finally achieved the long-coveted "Official Opposition" status. In Ontario and anywhere else outside the West, however, it failed abysmally. Since the March 1996 debacle, the Reform Party's strategy has been to minimize social and cultural issues, multiculturalism and immigration, focusing instead on fiscal and economic matters. Although in the short term this has turned out to be a safer course to follow, ignoring social and cultural issues may only result in the intensification of the climate of hostility to the kind of traditionalism essential not only for the Reform Party's identity but also for the survival of any meaningful local cultures.

Lacking a coherent sense of identity, Canada today is open to virtually any minoritarian or victimological claims. A paradigmatic example of this is the Canadian government's relations with its aboriginal peoples — Indians, Métis, and Inuit (Eskimo). In late November 1996, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Issues, which had been established five years earlier, reached its conclusions. The cost of the inquiry alone was $58 million dollars — about $13,000 per page. It simply recommended that the federal government give two billion more dollars per year to aboriginal peoples over a period of twenty years (i.e., $40 billion dollars). Otherwise, "violence was inevitable." The fact is that aboriginal peoples currently receive about $11,000 per capita in benefits and are exempt from most taxes. The report also recommended virtually total sovereignty for about 100 aboriginal "nations." In a blistering condemnation, the *Toronto Sun* suggested that a rejection of this report could be a good point to start questioning the entire victimological mentality increasingly pervasive in Canada.[15]

The double-barrelled assault by the aboriginal peoples' exclusive claim to all traditional benefits of a native-born population, and by a multiculturalism comprising all visible minorities claiming "absolute cultural

14. When asked by an interviewer what he would do if he were a store-owner and his customers objected to seeing an obviously gay or black person working in the store, the M.P. (Bob Ringma) suggested that the person could be assigned to work at the back of the store. Ringma's comment was dug up from a year-and-a-half-old interview, but was treated as if he had just made it, and as if it was tantamount to advocating Nazism.

15. These major aspects of the report, as well as the editorial response of the *Toronto Sun*, one of Toronto's major newspapers, were featured in the *Toronto Sun*, November 24, 1996, p. C1.

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self-determination" as well as extensive entitlements on the basis of past and present victimization by all white European peoples, compromises and delegitimates the possibility of developing any viable Canadian identity. English-Canadians, and increasingly even French-Canadians, are not left with any meaningful social and cultural claims. As for "white ethnics," such as Ukrainian-, Italian-, Portuguese- and Polish-Canadians, they supported multiculturalism early on, when it seemed as if it was meant to benefit them. With the ever-increasing arrival of visible minorities, however, they were re-classified as part of "the white oppressor majority." Far from offering a real plurality of distinct cultures, Canada today represents one hyper-liberal pseudo-culture with the most multiracial population on earth.

Despite its international reputation as the world's most free country, Canada is actually turning into the kind of totally administered society prefigured by the Frankfurt School shortly after WWII: a thorough, albeit benevolent totalitarianism, imposed through the mass media and the education systems. What was obvious about old-fashioned communism was the extent to which people in those societies hated the system. Resisters were admired by their fellow citizens, which made their suffering tolerable. Characterizations of opponents of communism as "fascists" or "reactionaries" were not generally believed and the system was crudely imposed "from above." Current liberal-democratic regimes, such as the Canadian, on the other hand, are predicated on a successfully mediatized ideology. As such, the new totalitarianism is imposed "from below." There resisters are seen as the enemy by the population at large and, far from receiving the tacit support of much of their society, they find themselves reviled as "hatemongers," "racists," etc.

One of the most effective strategies for mediatizing New Class ideology in order to create the illusion of "bottom-up change" is by allocating enormous state resources to politicized bureaucracies and special-interest groups under the pretext of safeguarding the general welfare. While early welfare measures, such as old-age pensions, health-care for the needy, etc., may have been justified a half century ago, today's attempts to extend a country's citizenship to practically everyone on the planet and the state funding of politicized bureaucracies have strained the initial premises of the welfare-state.

Although grants to special-interest groups constitute a relatively insignificant part of the government budget, it is money spent explicitly on political activities. Thus the annual budget of the Canadian National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the main feminist lobby

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group, is comparable to that of the Reform Party of Canada. Yet virtually all of NAC's funding comes from taxpayers' money, whereas the Reform Party has to raise its funds privately. The dense networks of "social activist" groups would probably wither without public funding.

Given these conditions, Preston Manning today has very little room to maneuver. He can continue to hammer away at fiscal issues, but in times of economic well-being that has less and less appeal. As for social issues, there is little he can do. If he criticizes the high levels of immigration and the excesses of multiculturalism, he will quickly be attacked as a "racist" — which explains why Manning has avoided those issues for years. To argue for tougher penalties for criminals triggers reactions such as those of former "moderate" Reform MP, Jim Silye, who in February 1996 complained that "the party was only interested in whipping and caning." To decry a general moral malaise already led to the disaster of March 1996. Manning is unlikely to try that again. His general approach is that of an accountant uninterested in confrontations. As for intellectual vision, Manning seems to fall short, having been shaped by the aridity of managerial theory and lacking any zest for philosophy or even any sense of history and traditions.[16]

One quality that serves Manning well is his self-control. He is unlikely ever to unleash the kind of "incriminating" rhetoric that would consign his party to oblivion in today's hypersensitive, hyper-politically correct Canada. He comes across as sincere and seems to feel very comfortable in today's narrowly constrained political climate. Even if the political climate were more favorable, it is unlikely he would behave differently. He is a moderate — a pragmatist, always hoping to play the role of conciliator rather than that of antagonist.

Manning may be able to become Canada's Prime Minister only in the context of an unlikely chain of events — almost a stroke of luck. One would be Quebec's endorsement of negotiations toward sovereignty.[17] In such a situation, people might begin to question the core paradigm of Canadianism as promulgated by the Liberal Party, since that paradigm would have failed to keep the country together. In the next election, Manning would be in a good position to obtain the majority of seats from

16. These traits became obvious when Manning declined to move into Stornoway, the official residence of the Leader of the Official Opposition. At one point, he jokingly suggested it could be converted into a bingo hall.

17. In the October 1995 referendum in Quebec, the endorsement of a process leading to separation came within a half-percentage point of victory. Prospects for such a move have deteriorated since then. See Frederick Johnstone, "The Decline and Fall of Quebec Separatism," in *Telos* 109 (Fall 1996), pp. 141-158.

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English Canada. Another possibility, even in the absence of a Quebec vote for sovereignty, is the establishment of an electoral alliance with the Progressive Conservative party whereby, e.g., the Reform Party would field candidates only in Western Canada and the PCs everywhere else. While this is impossible as long as Jean Charest remains the leader of the Progressive Conservatives, it may come about if Mike Harris (currently the Premier of Ontario) were to take over the leadership.

It is difficult to predict what would happen if Canadians (or English Canada), for the first time since 1962, finally elected a working Center-Right majority government, with a leadership willing to implement at least some traditionalist policies. The country has undergone such massive, fundamental changes that very little could be changed. Left-liberal opposition would be savage, as has been the case with the Harris government elected in Ontario in June 1995. From 1963 to now, the over-all strategy of the New Class Left-liberal elite has been to stymie any such development. Yet the mere presence of a traditionalist party in the federal parliament restrains the ruling Liberals and prevents excesses. Thus, in fiscal issues, the Reform Party has had an enormous impact on Liberal Party policies — something that cannot be said of social and cultural policies, immigration and multiculturalism.

An obvious alternative to the dislodging of the Liberal Party at the federal level is to follow various regional alternatives. The 1997 federal election results have already spotlighted the obvious lines of regional fracture in Canada. Despite all criticisms of the Reform Party, it remains (barring some unexpected changes in the Progressive Conservative Party) the only federal party sympathetic to social conservatives and traditionalists. It is also the only serious representative of Western Canadian interests in the Confederation. Reform will continue to draw such core support as long as it exists. Whether or not it is able to become anything more than an "Official Opposition" is another matter. The Reform Party's future struggles will probably be far more difficult than that of similar parties' in other countries, precisely because the New Class managerial-therapeutic regime is so strong in Canada.

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Reviews:

Modern Liberalism and the "Fascist" Comeback

John P. McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism: Against Politics as Technology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 352 pp.

Following his teacher, Stephen Holmes, in this book John P. McCormick sets out to vindicate the "liberal" tradition against the "stunning critiques" of one of liberalism's allegedly most dangerous opponents — the very embodiment of "illiberalism" — Carl Schmitt.[1] To make his case, McCormick relies primarily on Schmitt's least sympathetic commentators. In the process, however, he makes a number of errors. Moreover, he brands Schmitt's critique of liberalism "fascist," by constructing fascism as "the dark side of liberalism." Thus it becomes impossible to distinguish a fascist anti-liberal, which Schmitt was not, from a critic of liberalism, which he was. McCormick claims to find in Schmitt's 1923 critique of parliamentarism "an arrestingly approving account of the new politics of 'irrationality,' promoted by Sorel, Bakunin, and Mussolini" (16) — something which eluded, among others, Ellen Kennedy, who translated the work into English.[2] Though McCormick claims that his work "follows an apparently neutral historical-analytical treatment of the principles of liberal-parliamentary government," he reads too much into Schmitt's remarks about the rise of plebiscitary regimes. Schmitt simply reported what was taking place then — something many other Weimar legal scholars were also doing at that time.[3] His analysis stood out only

1. Stephen Holmes, *The Anatomy of Antiliberalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), especially pp. 50-60.

2. Carl Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, tr. by Ellen Kennedy (Cambridge, MA and London, Eng.: The MIT Press, 1985).

3. McCormick also goes too far in assuming that in his other 1923 book, *Roman Catholicism and Political Form*, Schmitt "was still a believing Catholic" (43), when both Gary Ulmen and Michele Nicoletti provide equally convincing evidence, from different perspectives, that this was not the case. See Ulmen's "Introduction" to his translation of *Roman Catholicism and Political Form* (Westport: Greenwood, 1996), pp. XVII-XXIV, and his article, "Politische Theologie und politische Ökonomie: Über Carl Schmitt und Max Weber," in Helmut Quaritsch, ed., *Complexio Oppositorum: Über Carl Schmitt* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1988), pp. 341-66; and Michele Nicoletti, *Transcendenza e Potere: La Teleogia Politica di Carl Schmitt* (Brescia: Editrice Morcelliana, 1987), pp. 152-94.

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because of the emphasis on "the intellectual foundations" of how the institution was envisioned. He certainly was not cooking up any recipes for fascist coups.

McCormick also fails to do justice to a pivotal passage in Schmitt's *Verfassungslehre* (1928), where Schmitt claims that democracy carries its own "existential justification," independently of any normative framework. Following Otto Kirchheimer and Jürgen Habermas, McCormick characterizes the democratic essence in *Verfassungslehre* as "soulless," since by collapsing all citizens into an undifferentiated popular will Schmitt's democracy does not allow for any friction between individuals and social institutions. Here McCormick cites Holmes' recommendation of the Madisonian "scheme of limitations on democracy" as "actually more 'democratic' than the pure or direct theories of democracy associated with Rousseau and Jefferson," (244). Yet both Holmes and McCormick undervalue Schmitt's sound distinction between liberalism and democracy based on Madison's vision of a classical liberal but not a predominantly democratic regime.

In the *Federalist Papers*, particularly # 47, Madison was far more concerned with avoiding "the accumulation of powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands, whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective" than with allowing the popular will to express itself. The avoidance of tyranny through the separation of power and the filtering of the popular will through the indirect election of presidents and senators were both means by which Madison, Hamilton and Jay hoped to avoid the "universal reprobation" that would follow the exercise of undivided sovereignty.[4] Schmitt is right, however, to view such concerns as not democratic. Unlike principled liberals, democrats desire a regime reflecting their will directly: whether in the now triumphant form of Max Weber's mass democracy, whose "substance" lies in the multiplication of entitlements administered by a centralized bureaucracy, or in the Schmittian alternative of a populist and culturally homogeneous self-government.

A defect in Schmitt's theory of democracy, which McCormick does not notice, is the bad fit between its classical and modern versions. Schmitt clearly had in mind Greek or medieval democracies when he argued that, unlike liberalism, democracy "manifests itself in how well it excludes what is foreign and threatens homogeneity."[5] Much of this account of democratic life as the affirmation of inborn consensus reflects Schmitt's reading of Rousseau's *Social Contract* and other works on premodern democracy. None of this is particularly relevant for the technological mass democracy described by Schmitt: a deracinated and

4. *The Federalist Papers* (New York: New American Library, 1961), 301. On the "separation of power doctrine," see William B. Gwyn, *The Meaning of the Separation of Power* (New Orleans: Tulane University Press, 1965); and M. J. C. Vile, *Constitutionalism and the Separation of Power* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).

5. See Carl Schmitt, "Der Gegensatz von Parlamentarismus und moderner Massendemokratie," in *Positionen und Begriffe in Kampf mit Weimar-Genf-Versailles* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1940), pp. 59-60.

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materially driven society he wants to hold together not through a return to the Greek polis but with modern means, i.e, strong executive leadership and an "economically homogeneous state."[6] While this can lead in more than one direction — both to the increasingly socially engineered US and to an interwar authoritarian regime — it does not have much to do with the premodern democratic community which is also Schmitt's polar opposite of a "liberal" government.

McCormick simply assumes that Schmitt was a "fascist" critic of liberalism, even though Schmitt never identified himself as one. In any case, McCormick's inference from the evidence he cites is not at all convincing. Schmitt was a political adventurer, who went from would-be putschist Kurt von Schleicher (whom McCormick inexplicably calls Schmitt's "mentor") to Schleicher's Nazi enemies (266). Schmitt was skeptical about the prospects of German parliamentary democracy and penned gloomy thoughts about the depoliticizing effects of a technological society. Such biographical details do not prove that Schmitt was even a conservative revolutionary, let alone a fascist visionary. Rather, they help identify him as a man of the traditional Right, which is actually all that McCormick demonstrates.

In a bizarre attempt to make Schmitt look sinister, McCormick provides this rhetorical gem: "The fact that he left behind as his final thoughts on the Jewish question the despicable sentiments expressed in his postwar diary and not instead some attempt at an apology, or at least a retraction, of his National Socialist words and deed ultimately necessitates classifying him as an anti-Semite and a figure who must be held to some degree culpable in the Third Reich's destruction of European Jewry" (270).[7] Following Heinrich Meier, McCormick treats Schmitt's bitter references to Jews in the *Glossarium*, his post-war diaries, as the "final word" on the subject. But such an interpretation is unwarranted, given Schmitt's close identification with Jewish scholars and students throughout the Weimar period, his postwar friendship with Jewish scholars, particularly George Schwab and Jacob Taubes, but also Raymond Aron and Alexandre Kojève, among other, and the obvious motive for his outbursts in the *Glossarium*, i.e., the perceived role of former Jewish associates in discrediting Schmitt during the Third Reich and in keeping him out of German academic life thereafter.[8] Even more unsettling is McCormick's sense of historical causation. Schmitt, he believes, should be held "culpable for the Third Reich's destruction of European Jewry" for not providing "an apology for his impact from "those words and deeds" on Nazi genocide, it

6. *Ibid.*, p. 126. See also Paul Gottfried, *Carl Schmitt: Politics and Theory* (Westport: Greenwood, 1990), pp. 68-70.

7. In fact, as Ulmen points out, Schmitt did make an explicit critique of the crimes of the Nazi regime and thus an implicit *mea culpa* of his own involvement with the regime in the *Gutachten* he wrote in 1945. See Gary Ulmen, "Just Wars or Just Enemies" in *Telos* 109 (Fall 1996), p. 109.

8. On the manipulation of Schmitt's scholarship by German conservative revolutionaries, see Joseph Bendersky, *Carl Schmitt: Theorist for the Reich* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 134-44.

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remains unclear how National Socialist words and deeds."[9] Leaving aside the lack of evidence of any Schmitt's apology or retraction after 1945 would have changed the course of Hitler's "Final Solution" carried out years earlier.

Moreover, McCormick's efforts to implicate Friedrich Hayek and Leo Strauss in some right-wing conspiracy against "liberalism" derived from Schmitt's ideas are empty speculations. The bridge between past and present, between interwar German Nazism and post-WWII "North American conservatism" is imagined to go through Strauss, his "right-leaning disciples" and the "Austrian political economist and Schmitt-devotee Friedrich Hayek." From such unlikely vehicles, fascist penumbras allegedly lead to the "market-centered, futuristic, techno-economic ideology of progress and freedom," perhaps best represented by the views of the incumbent Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (303). Here McCormick is clumsily over-reaching. Though Strauss and Schmitt shared some moral assumptions in the early 1930s, McCormick never *demonstrates* that Strauss' reservations about liberalism shaped his subsequent career in the US — or the school he founded at the University of Chicago. It is also impossible to see how Strauss' disciples, engaged in a pursuit of global democracy and human rights, have anything to do with Schmitt's "antiliberalism." If, according to McCormick, in the 1930s Strauss choose, like Schmitt, to place a "pessimistic anthropology above physics," understood as openness to technological innovation, it is hard to understand how this particular choice influenced either American Straussians or alleged the Strauss clone, Newt Gingrich.[10]

While McCormick's treatment of Schmitt as a critic of technology merits attention, exaggeration does not help his argument. Contrary to McCormick's repeated assertions, Schmitt does not refer to technology as the "Antichrist," nor does he reiterate Heidegger's "Nietzschean" hostility to technological societies, seeking to counteract them with "the dynamic of mythologizing," as if that was in fact Heidegger's intention (89). Least of all does McCormick prove his point by manufacturing questionable glosses on Schmitt's commentary on Theodor Däubler's "Northern Lights" (88). This dense poetic work by a young Catholic editor is full of criticisms of a materially-obsessed world. But Schmitt's commentary does not prove that he shares Däubler's view or that it corresponds to the one McCormick attributes to the poet and his interpreter.

Despite misgivings about material progress, Schmitt believed technology was the inevitable organizational principle in modern political life — a point McCormick

9. On Schmitt and the "Jewish question," see Bernard Rüthers, *Carl Schmitt im Dritten Reich*, 2nd ed. (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1990), pp. 95-96; and George Schwab, "Carl Schmitt Hysteria in the United States," in *Telos* 91 (Spring, 1992), pp. 99-107.

10. For a close reading of Straussian political rhetoric, paying special attention to its social democratic triumphalism, see Claes G. Ryn's *The New Jacobinism: Can Democracy Survive?* (Washington: National Humanities Institute, 1991). See also Paul Gottfried, *The Conservative Movement*, revised edition (New York: Twayne-Macmillan, 1993), pp. 73-74 and 125-41.

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makes in commenting on "The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations." Schmitt also praises the mechanistic character of the Hobbesian Leviathan in "Der Staat als Mechanismus bei Hobbes und Descartes" (1937). Here, in what is often read as a veiled attack on Nazi ideological fervor, he unmistakably praises the neutralizing achievement of the early European state. Schmitt's views on neutralizations, mechanizations and technical change were by no means as uniformly negative as McCormick claims. This implacable critic of Schmitt wishes to have it both ways. By indicating that Schmitt disliked "technicity" more than technology, McCormick makes it impossible to apply to him Jeffrey Herf's category, invented for describing conservative revolutionaries, of "anti-modern modernism." Along with other anti-moderns forced to embrace technology, Schmitt allegedly helped to create a mentality that eventually led to Nazism. Perhaps as ominously, from McCormick's perspective, Schmitt is said to have nurtured today's predominant anti-modern modernist Right: the "futuristic technoeconomic ideology: of Newt Gingrich (303). McCormick's Schmitt is given double duty as a whipping boy. While associated with reactionary forces in a crusade against technology, he is simultaneously depicted as articulating a technocratically-based anti-modern ideology. These accusations may seem damning but are based almost entirely on conjecture.

Schmitt's link to Hayek is even more doubtful, despite McCormick's deference to Renato Cristi and his use of William Scheuerman's portentous musing about Hayek and Schmitt.[11] But Cristi does not explicitly argue that Hayek was a "Schmitt devotee." He merely points out the presence of Schmittian themes in Hayeks' *Constitution of Liberty*, e.g., the identification of traditional state power with coercive authority, the liberal order with politically unfettered economic activity, and the rule of legal norms and socialism with the overthrow of liberal legality.[12] While there is no peculiarly Schmittian twist in any of these associations, nor evidence that Hayek even held a positive view of Schmitt, Cristi, along with McCormick and Scheuerman, is clearly looking for a telltale relation between Schmittian antiliberalism and liberals who turn their backs on socialism.

This is the subtext running throughout McCormick's complaints about Schmitt as an archetypal fascist. What makes Schmitt's "stunning critiques of liberalism" so devastating is their supposed persistence in the growing wave of anti-liberalism. Schmitt's "highly complicated road to fascism" is seen as "instructive" because fascism is no longer recognized as an "immanent sociopolitical alternative." Instead of

11. William E. Scheuerman, "The Unholy Alliance of Carl Schmitt and Friedrich A. Hayek," in *Constellations*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (October 1997). Most of the argument of McCormick's book concerning the tortuous Teutonic genealogy of today's Congressional Republicans can also be found in Shadia B. Drury's *Leo Strauss and the American Right* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), pp. 196-198. Along with McCormick, Drury associates Schmitt, Heidegger, Strauss and (less significantly) Friedrich Hayek as forerunners of the Gingrich counterrevolution.

12. See Renato Cristi, "Hayek and Schmitt on the Rule of Law," in *Canadian Journal of Political Science,* Vol. 17, No. 3 (1984), pp. 521-35.

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viewing fascism as an omnipresent danger, most people today treat it as "a phenomenon cordoned off historically." This precludes an understanding of the "fluidity" between liberalism and fascism, and the extent to which the latter remains a "product of, and solution to liberalism's theoretical-practical impasse." McCormick warns of the incipient dangers of fascism in the Western world, where "mainstream politicians unabashedly suggest dismantling the separation of powers in the name of populism," where "social groups, whether self- or more often elite-defined in terms of the supposedly irreducible 'concrete being' of ethnic, religious or cultural identity compete for control of power apertures," where "detainment camps once again mar the spiritual and physical landscape of Central Europe," etc. (12-13).

While McCormick's liberalism seems safely rooted in the government, the media and the universities, he nevertheless suggests that a major ideological shift is underway. Fascist populists, who oppose the judicial-bureaucratic direction of democracy, are voting in referenda against government-imposed gender and racial quotas, and Californians have even had the chutzpah to pass a referendum against providing social services to *illegal* immigrants. In the latter case, however, social-engineering judges came to the rescue by teasing out of the Fourteenth Amendment a "universal right," transcending mere citizenship, to social services paid by American taxpayers. Lest such populist insurgencies increase against pseudo-Madisonian replicas of constitutional government, McCormick wishes to warn of the fascist dangers presented by Dole Republicans and neoconservative journalists.

It may be useful to review the conceptual confusions that allow McCormick to reach this position. First, it is unclear that the terms "liberal" and "fascist" as used in his book have any fixed historical point of reference. Following Stephen Holmes, McCormick makes "liberal" identical with everything he fancies (open borders, affirmative action and "women's rights"), while not paying much attention to such bourgeois liberal tenets as property rights. McCormick can call his idiosyncratic vision whatever he wishes. But what he and his mentor embrace as the "liberal" heritage is not what bourgeois liberals in other ages and other countries believed about property, sexual distinctions, abortion, racial equity, immigration and gay rights — to name just a few of the issues over which McCormick and earlier liberals would have disagreed fundamentally. There are reams of texts to show that the *Federalist Papers* (particularly #2) affirm the need for ethnic and cultural unity in the projected American federal union, and that the protection of private property, freely entered contractual relations, and civil order was basic to the liberal defense of the state.

Second, in McCormick's worldview "liberalism" is now clashing with an equally free-floating point of reference, "fascism." For McCormick, the "fascist" epithet is the demonized opposite of whatever he approves of, e.g. Hayek's defense of free markets, democratic populism or "paleoconservatism." Even more ominously, fascism is a morphing infection, imagined to have gone from Mussolini's Italy through the tracts of Carl Schmitt down to the present occupants of the Center

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and Center-Right of the American journalistic-political spectrum.[13] Here McCormick shares Walter Laqueur's aversion to a chronologically and geographically "cordoned off" fascism. Instead, Laqueur associates such multicultural and politically convenient targets as Mussolini, Gianfranco Fini, Jacques Doriot, Alain de Benoist and various Muslim (albeit never Jewish or Zionist) Fundamentalists.[14] All of these characters exemplify a "staph infection" that breaks out under different names in different places.[15]

This perhaps is what is most wrong about McCormick's study: not the frenzied efforts to breathe new life into the anti-Schmitt dossier cobbled together in the 1950s by Fijalkowski and resurrected by Habermas, Scheuerman, and Holmes; nor the generally accurate perception, however exaggerated, that Schmitt was not entirely fair to the liberal tradition. Most troublesome here is McCormick's reckless haste to apply the fascist brush even against those with traditional liberal views. The overshadowing role of this ideological impulse can best be seen in the trajectory of his book, from some semblance of a critical apparatus to the name-calling of the last few chapters. McCormick's extensive research could have resulted in a considerably better work. It is unfortunate that he failed to produce it.

Paul Gottfried

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13. See Paul Gottfried, "Fascism and Anti-Fascism," in *Chronicles* (March 1998), pp. 13-15.

14. Walter Laqueur, *Fascism, Past, Present and Future* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

15. A work that might upset McCormick, Holmes, John Rawls and other certified "liberals" is Barry A. Shain's *The Myth of American Individualism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994). In this exhaustive study of communal patterns in the US from the 18th century on, Shain carefully documents the operation of a persistent Calvinist influence generated by Calvinist churches that both established and enforced social morality. A classical liberal federal constitutional structure, according to Shain, did not encourage individualism at the local level. Rather, it permitted highly organic communities to survive with minimal interference from the top. Shain further demonstrates that the celebration of Locke, as the true American founding father, was predictably accompanied by the emergence of the modern federal welfare state. By interpreting the American founding as an affirmation of individualism, one could then justify the growing reach of public administration as an instrument of empowering individuals. Equally important, Lockean natural rights have become theoretically separated from the defense of property — a strategy pursued by Rawls, Holmes, and McCormick. For a critique of this socialist facelift of the property-defending Locke, see Paul Gottfried, "In Search of a Liberal Essence," in *Society*, Vol. 32, No. 6 (September/October 1995), pp. 39-51.

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The Return of Geopolitics?

David T. Murphy, *The Heroic Earth: Geopolitical Thought In Weimar Germany, 1918-1933* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1997) 338 + xv pp.

Geocentrism and late-modernity are closely related. Geographical thought connects in often overlooked ways with other contemporary ideas that play important roles in politics, economics and society. Thus the exploitation of geographical ideas to serve political purposes has been a fixture of international relations from manifest destiny to National Socialism, the Cold War to globalization. David T. Murphy compellingly captures the historical moment (Weimar Germany) in which natural law and territoriality were first dealt with as *geopolitics,* becoming a significant tool for understanding modern social and political life. Geopolitics made it possible to sidestep the divisive specifics of political organization and promote a vision of the nation-state as an interactive unity of culture, race and geography.

18th and 19th century scholars viewed geography as the interplay of society and habitat — that compound of climate, land, natural resources, and location which makes up the natural environment. Yet the earth's conditions interposed themselves passively: geography played an involuntary role. Politics and economics were considered the main determinants of the world order. Shortly before the outbreak of WWI, Rudolf Kjellen put geography at the service of state policy with his vision of geopolitics. Geography, Kjellen hypothesized in *Die Großmächte der Gegenwart,* could be utilized to further the objectives of statecraft. After the war, German interest in geopolitics flourished. The bitter disappointment of defeat, the onerous reparations demanded by Versailles, the loss of territory, a series of economic and social crises, and a perceived lack of strong leadership intensified the appeal of geopolitics for thinkers from many political disciplines. Among the Weimar *Volk,* the earth took the role of hero in political, economic and social discussions, decisively shaping national histories, the characteristic qualities of ethnic groups and even individual personalities. As Murphy writes, "The notion that geographic space, the earth's topography, was an active force that Germans had ignored at their peril, supplied seemingly plausible explanations for the disaster that had befallen Germany, and it suggested there were ways to reverse the verdict of the war" (125).

Weimar geopolitics was foreshadowed during the later 19th century. The work of Friedrich Ratzel, a zoologist turned geographer, articulated the conviction that parts of the earth (including political areas) could be properly regarded as organisms. By analogy, organisms were assumed to obey the laws of growth

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(and death). Ratzel's personal prestige threw the respectable mantle of scientific scholarship over a political dogma which had sprung up in many parts of the world, expressed in such modernist terms as living space (*Lebensraum*), natural boundaries, and manifest destiny. Both Ratzel and Kjellen emphasized the nation-state as the ideal primary edifice of the social order. By implication, the nation-state was the geopolitical organism *par excellence.*

For Weimar intellectuals, united by a desire to subvert Versailles, a focus on space promised guidance to the unstable state organism for life and growth. WWI and the subsequent crisis of German modernity — the economic uncertainty, widespread political violence, repudiation of traditional ideas of social order — proved the obsolescence of exclusively political, economic, and, of course, military solutions. Geography, on the other hand, could reveal the forces propelling social change because, as Otto Maull put it in 1928, "the organism's struggle for existence is always a struggle for space" (29). Consequently, popular debate in the Weimar Republic centered on spatial destiny (*Raumschicksal*) in all its variations. Thus, in response to Weimar anguish immediately following the War over the loss of territories with ethnic Germans, the Right coalesced around the maintenance of *Lebensraum;* the Left, *Arbeitsraum.* For a state making capital of geography, attainment of the popularly-held Nietzschean ideal of "will to greatness" in terms of nationality or customs would necessarily bring in territory of considerable value. To justify expansion beyond the frontiers of common ethnicity, an alternative geographic doctrine had to be invoked. Instead of cultural affinity, Weimar geopolitical thought increasingly stressed the state's material elements — climate, land forms, natural resources, frontier zones and location. In short, it set up a politically ideal geographical environment as the avowed territorial goal. Because the state was assumed to be an organism, it was argued that it must be allowed to grow to its destined "natural boundaries." These were defined in such a way as to incorporate all the adjacent natural resources and to provide the sinews of warfare adequate for military security and dominance, as the excellent series of maps accompanying Murphy's text illustrate. Such an ideal must inevitably involve the annexation of territory belonging to other nationalities. No matter, the natural law of growth in the political "organism" was paramount and must be obeyed. A program for wars of conquest was therefore the only logical or practical outcome of Weimar geopolitics. Such a program was drawn up in detail, with terrifying racist naïveté, by Ewald Banse in *Raum und Volk in Weltkriege* (1932).

Murphy is at his best when he describes the many ways a geopolitical perspective penetrated the heterogeneous, pluralistic, and often contradictory modernist elements of Weimar society. German education, technology, folkish beliefs, expressionist art — all aspects of popular Weimar culture — were infused with geopolitical interpretations. Thus new concepts in constitutional law, such as Carl Schmitt's *Grossraum*, were understood awithin the context of "geojurisprudence," to use the words of Manfred Langhans-Ratzeburg, who praised their

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"earth dependence." Because law had been removed for so long from its moorings in soil and ethnicity, he wrote in 1928, "the very sense for the mutual interconnection of constitutional law and geography has until very recently remained largely undeveloped" (114).[1] As Murphy convincingly demonstrates, geopolitics was most vital in Germany during the Weimar years. It created in the public imagination a new vision of Germany's place in Europe and the world. It lost its vitality in the Nazi era, becoming merely a rhetorical prop for Hitler's war machine. Weimar intellectuals, in other words, viewed the world according to a consciously elaborated geographical program. While nature always played a part in the causing and waging of war, there was no precedent before Weimar Germany for the use of geography as a conscious incentive to fight.

Murphy concludes with the question: "Is geopolitics any more useful today?" (291). By meticulously exposing an ideological misuse of geopolitics in the past, Murphy now calls for a reconsideration of its concrete nature and relevance today. Whatever ideological agendas geopolitics served in the past, they should not be mistaken for the field itself. As Wittfogel's Marxist writings illustrate, geopolitics was not, and is not, an essentially right-wing or even proto-Nazi perspective.[2] With the decline of the nation-state, the return of geopolitics is a welcome development and Murphy's work helps clarify many misunderstandindgs which still surround it.

Anthony Favro

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1. As Murphy makes clear, "Schmitt differentiated his use of the term [*Großraum*] from geopolitics, arguing that it emphasized the dominant political idea of a region" (29). Geopolitics, according to Schmitt, largely avoided the political and therefore lacked a rigorous theoretical basis. See Joseph Bendersky, *Carl Schmitt, Theorist for the Reich* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 250-63.

2. See Karl Wittfogel, "Geopolitics, Geographical Materialism and Marxism," in *Antipode*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (1985), pp. 21-72. This is a special issue devoted entirely to "The Geographical Ideas of Karl Wittfogel." The Wittfogel article is a translation of "Geopolitik, Geographischer Materialismus und Marxismus," originally published in 1929 in *Unter dem banner des Marxismus*, Vol. 3, Nos. 1, 4 and 5. See also Wittfogel's "Die naturlichen Untersachen der Wirtshaftgeschichte," published in 1931 in *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, Vol. 67, Nos. 4-5.

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The Politics of Opera

John Bokina, *Opera and Politics: From Monteverdi to Henze* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 240 pp +xiv.

The importance of politics in the fashioning of opera has hardly gone unnoticed among specialists of the genre and musicologists in general. In the works of Verdi and Wagner's *Ring,* politics has been analyzed to near exhaustion, and as John Bokina admits in his introduction, "he found that [he] had nothing new to say about these subjects" (p. 3). So why this book? First, because the author, an opera-loving, professional political scientist, wanted to write a book "that he had always wanted to read"; one that would uncover in opera the major classic concepts of political philosophy from Plato, to Machiavelli, Locke, Rousseau and the philosophers of the Enlightenment (p. xii). Moreover, Bokina's search comes in response to Quentin Skinner's plea for abandoning the narrowness of "formal political texts and tracts" and for enriching them with their "appropriate ideological context," to be found "in political ideas" that, [for a given] age are not confined to formal texts of political theory but are embodied in a variety of cultural forms" (p. xi). Thus, despite the fact that this book is largely exegetic (and probably of more interest to serious opera-lovers than political theorists, considering the "meta-directions" that political theory has adopted), its choice of themes is a refreshing reconfirmation of a feeling often upstaged by the glitter of today's operatic world: namely, that this apparent indulgence in rapturous words and music contains in effect a lot more than meets the senses.

Despite the recent opera renaissance, the "ideological context" of the late 20th century has obfuscated the relationship between opera and politics. The most clear evidence of this comes with each new staging of classic works by contemporary opera directors who, apart from their personal creative ambitions, find it necessary to update the content and translate it into 20th-century class and political conflicts: Peter Sellars' re-readings of several Mozart operas are a prime example, as Bokina also notes (p. 200). The varying degree of success of such enterprises leads to a number of questions as well as conclusions concerning the role of opera today and the type of audience reception that opera does and/or should elicit. While reserving these issues for later, let us turn first to a rough sketch of the "ideological climate" in which opera situates itself today. This should clarify some of the reasons why, despite the lack of novelty in Bokina's association of politics and opera, the set of political problems that he chooses to illuminate in operas from the 17th through the 20th century constitute a multi-faceted contemporary problematic.

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In the 12th century, starting roughly after the first decade through and until the mid-1960s, the popularity that opera had sustained for a good four centuries begun to show a slump. Until then, the opera, as a *locus* for entertainment as well as a source of musical inspiration for other types of music making — from popular tunes, sheet music for home use, to music-hall material — had exercised a pervasive influence.[1] Although the world wars and the resulting worldwide economic hardships and political turmoil were bound to affect an admittedly expensive art genre like opera, additional factors, far more germane to musical evolution and the "politics of music" seem to have caused the crisis of opera.

The most important development by far occurred with the rise of Modernism, the revolutionary serial (12-tone or a-tonal) re-definition of musical content, which soon spilled over into a parallel questioning of traditional forms.[2] Abandoning established melodic and harmonic patterns, a number of 20th century composers turned to "difficult," hard to digest sonorities, rattling and confusing traditionalist audiences. The message and the medium of opera began to seem irrelevant and anachronistic. And, although major composers like Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Bartok, Hindemith, among others, eventually moved into more nuanced and eclectic directions that also included opera works, the image of opera appeared tarnished and its future uncertain.

Secondly, as a matter of cost, and of the distance it provided to its faithful patrons from venues of mass entertainment, opera-going acquired a class character and became a bourgeois activity and an easy target for leftist art criticism. Much of that critique drew on the Soviet condemnation of all art that diverged from the strictures of "socialist realism" and indulged in depicting the "immoralities" of feudal society, religious conflicts, and tales of the nobility.[3]

Finally, a decisive reason for the declining popularity of opera was the spread of the technological revolution in sound production which, in turn, resulted in an unprecedented proliferation of musical styles, new (electric) instruments and literally endless possibilities for experimenting with sound and music. With the help of mass media, pop, rock, musical theater, blues, jazz and folk music exploded, and eventually went to inhabit autonomous colonies, each too vast to allow for thorough familiarity with other areas of musical production. The rarefied world of opera buffs shrunk to a class that could afford the leisure of attendance and costly recordings and the time required for delving into often foreign languages and epochs. It was not until the end of the 1960s that opera began, once again, to climb in popularity — thanks to the same culture industry which had engineered the pop music explosion and now jumped at the profitability of

1. Arthur Jacobs, *A Short History of Western Music* (London: Pelikan Books, 1973), p. 233.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 286 ff.
3. Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, tr. by A. Knodel and I. Dahl (New York, Vintage Books, 1947), pp. 109-110.

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operatic stardom and the world of divas. Nowadays, the new, media-dominated allure of opera plays on an affluent boom generation reared on compartmentalizing time in neat "quality" segments that instrumentalize art into mere entertainment and disconnect it from the world and the history of ideas. This is precisely where Bokina attempts to contribute, in order to recover the linkages between political ideas and the vitality of operatic creation.

The operas examined in this book belong broadly to two types: a large grouping that encapsulates the political concerns of a given era and a second group of three works that, as a function of a given political climate and the composer's self-situating, result in "artist-operas," i.e., works that "self-consciously explored the political roles of art and the artist" (p. 4). The first grouping starts with the earliest-known 3 masterpieces of Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643), *La Favola d'Orfeo, Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* and *L'Incoronazione di Poppea.* They give Bokina the opportunity for thematizing respectively "the Prince as deity, Beast and Tyrant." The exploration of major Machiavellian *leitmotives* like, the interplay of Virtue and Fortune, the quest for order and the best form of government, and the different social and political climate between (absolutist) Florence and (republican) Venice; at each juncture we are also presented with the composer's personal agenda, together with a knowledgeable discussion of the musical score and its effectiveness in expressing (melodically) the story (dramatic action). In this era, therefore, melodrama — the original and correct term for opera — follows closely its original purpose which, according to Caccini, a 16th-century composer among the initial group of artists to entertain the idea of creating an opera, was the forging of "a musical drama in the spirit of ancient Greek tragedy."[4] This is a crucial point because, as Bokina notes, most discussions about opera, instead of treating the socio-political realm as *content*, usually relegate it to the background, under the rubric of context.

The content of Beethoven's *Fidelio* is a clear case of the dimensions of "revolutionary virtue," aptly handled here with rich insights from classic political philosophy, critical theory and the history of music. Wagner's *Parsifal* proves far more complex, since Wagner's "utopian vision of romantic anticapitalism" revolutionized musical expression while holding on to a legendary content imbued with the longing for a long-lost idealized community.

From its inception, the operatic artifact stood as a two-dimensional medium/message: the musical expression (*melos*) of actions whose dramatic/epic/heroic dimensions always contained a rigorous political, i.e., *universal* message, regardless of the *particular* (love) story that was planted in the middle and served "as a pretext" for conveying to the audience the didactic aspects and the eventual *catharsis*.[5] Unfortunately, Bokina does not stress this point strongly or often

4. Jacobs, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

5. Giuliana Fantoni, "Il Medioevo e il Melodramma Italiano dell'Ottocento," in *La Rivista Illustrata del Museo Teatrale alla Scala*, No. 15 (1992) Part I, p. 92.

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enough and, as his book progresses to other themes and works, it is easy to lose sight of opera's *raison d'être.* Had he pursued this thread in a comparative key from one opera to another he might have made a far stronger case for all the non-artist operas he picked, and obviously, for Srauss' *Elektra* or for Henze's *The Bassarids*, the operatic recycling of Euripides' *Bacchae*. Moreover, the analysis of Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron,* stands to gain a lot when seen in this light rather than the confining framework of an artist's personal politics. This is not to take away from the fact that Bokina is quite right in approaching operas like *Elektra* and Schoenberg's *Erwartung* as expressions of "the politics of psychological interiorization" and, therefore, as genuine constituents of the "ideological climate" of this century. I am simply saying that, although *Erwartung,* a rarely performed short piece, is probably worth examining as an extreme example of unanchored music about an abstract type of a deranged Woman during this angst-ridden century, compared to Electra's myth, it seems short on universality.

The centrality of a myth, or a narrative, gives opera what Lucien Goldmann calls the *internal coherence* of a work of art:[6] the "proper structure" of music for expressing a narrative that is also acted out (*recitative,* comes not from the French/English "to recite," but from the Italian *recitare,* to act on stage).[7] The continued appropriation of ancient Greek and Roman myths in the 20th century attest to the efficacy of this internal architecture — witness, e.g., Luigi Dallapiccola's opera on Ulysses, and Henze's use of Euripides's *Bacchae*, the subject of Bokina's last chapter. However, other grand narratives prove equally effective. Biblical allegories (as in *Moses und Aron, Salome, Sanson et Dalida,* for example) work as well as Shakespearean themes — among Verdi's favorite and best material, as shown in *Macbeth* and *Otello.* Nevertheless, the force of a legend or large historical event is not by itself a sufficient condition for lending an opera internal coherence and/or endowing it with the aura of a masterpiece. Bokina's choices in the category of artist-operas, with the clear exception of *Moses,* seem vulnerable to the danger of "psychologizing" the work of art by reducing it to an individual subject and a "specific" meaning:[8] the case of Pfitzner's *Palestrina*, the 16th-century composer who supposedly saved polyphony in church from getting banned by the Council of Trent, and the case of Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* offer Bokina the opportunity to discuss exhaustively the personal politics

6. Lucien Goldmann, *Essays on the Sociology of Literature*, tr. and ed. by W.Q. Boelhower (New York: Telos Press, 1980), pp. 76-77.

7. Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

8. ". . . I think it is necessary both to accept and to reject psychoanalysis . . . to leave it a considerable place in the analysis of the psychological processes of the cultural creation, but also to avoid any attempt to connect the objective meaning of this creation to an individual subject, a process that must necessarily (for methodological reasons) lead to a dangerous reduction, and even to the complete effacement of this meaning. When I speak of subjective meaning, it would perhaps be more worthwhile to say the *specific* meaning; indeed it is a matter of the literary meaning of literary works, the pictorial meaning of paintings. . . etc." Goldmann, *op. cit.*, p.110.

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of two composers who identify with their protagonists and eventually flee from political involvement into resignation and the world of artistic creation. Of particular interest here is a comparative discussion on what constitutes a work of art — whether it is craft and/or inspiration — as well as the source of inspiration. For Pfitzner it appears to lie in history or love whereas Hindemith draws from naturalistic-Pythagorean concepts of cosmic harmony. Bokina handles the analyses in a very scholarly and jargon-free manner, and informs the works with aesthetic, musical and political insights. But the reader remains unconvinced with the justifications for the composers' themes and the sources of their inspiration. Of course, as Stravinsky argued, the critic is not supposed to ask the "why" of a work, but the "how."[9] Bokina's exegesis of the (aesthetic) "how" is admirable. The political scientist, however, is always looking for the "why" that drives an actor to a particular political or non-political gesture. In these two choices of heroes — Palestrina and Albrecht/Mathis — the composers' frame of reference appears idiosyncratically arcane, approaches psychologism, and deflects from Bokina's declared purpose to search for political content, as opposed to context.

In contrast, the case of Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron* is a *tour de force*, as is also Bokina's chapter on Mozart's *Don Giovanni* which illuminates "The Dialectic of Operatic Civilization." Although *Don Giovanni* is not an artist-opera, and Bokina does not connect it to *Moses*, the two share much of the problematic of the Enlightenment — reason vs. unreason, baroque vs. progressive morality, the place of natural law, emancipation vs. sensuous deprivation and so on. It may be interesting to inject here that the story of *Don Giovanni* shares striking similarities with Euripides' play *Cyclop.* In this satyrical drama, the homeric giant Polyphemus, a barbaric, human flesh-devouring libertine, meets with final punishment by Zeus (*commendatore*?), the supervisor of civilized morality and divine justice, amid a chorus extolling the triumph of propriety.[10]

The dialectic of reason vs. unreason draws additional validity by harking back to the contrasting archetypes of Dionysus and Apollo, the gods of excess and of enlightenment, respectively. And whereas the conflict between these two divine forces subtends Mozart's comic drama, it gains tragic proportions when carried to its logical extremes in the story of the *Bacchae* in Henze's opera. Thus, although Bokina does not stress this internal thread connecting the two works, it lends elegance and cogency to his study. As a rule, the Dionysus-Apollo polarity remains crucial when contemplating and evaluating the internal balance of tensions in a work of art. In Stravinsky's words (*pace* Adorno), "What is important for the lucid ordering of the work — for its crystallization — is that all the Dionysean elements which set the imagination of the artist in motion and make the life-sap rise must be properly subjugated before they intoxicate us, and must

9. Stravinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

10. See P. Lekatsas, "Introduction" to *Euripides: Four Plays*, ed. by E. P. Papanoutsos. [in ancient and modern Greek] (Athens, Zacharopoulos Publ., 1954), p. 3.

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finally be made to submit to the law [of music]: Apollo demands it."[11]

While Stravinsky is here referring to a work of music as both medium and message, an operatic composition displays additional complexity by containing both a musical and a narrative message. Turning to the latter in Henze's *The Bassarids* (c.1966), a countercultural opera on the victory of the Dionysean principle over the Apollonian law and order, Bokina puts together a forceful critique of the message. Based on Euripides' tragedy *The Bacchae,* Hans Henze attempted to recreate the victory of the counterculture against the forces of the establishment. The story pits Dionysus against king Pentheus of ancient Thebes who is ultimately killed and dismembered by his own mother — an ardent follower of Dionysus — because the king refused to believe in this god and would not accept that his orgiastic ways were to rule the world. The bloodbath of the *finale* lends a "dialectical edge" to the work, says Bokina, since it presages the self-destructive excesses of the late 1960s that could only lead to total chaos. Ironically, Henze, despite his international success with this and with his other operas, "appears to have abandoned the form precisely because of its institutional legacy."[12] Last fall, the American Repertory Theater's staging of *The Bacchae* in Cambridge, Mass., offered the by now obligatorily updated version, with a punk-style king Pentheus (as a conservative!) and laid bare the fundamental problems of this play — although this seems far from the director's intentions. In essence, this is a weak tragedy, lacking transcendence or real antagonisms. Dionysus is a satanic, vindictive, egocentric god whose message has no moral validity against a king who is merely trying to uphold a city's tradition and who acts out his fate unheroically, as ordained by fate. The punishment is the hollow victory of the forces of revenge, all the while invoking the ecstasies of love and wine. It can only serve as a reminder of the horrors committed in the name of self-styled gods and gurus of recent decades, but the weight of that message is questionable, unless someone could put it in terms of a satirical drama or an opera with a moralistic *buffa* ending, like *Don Giovanni.*

In his postcript on recent operas in a political key, Bokina shows clearly that the intricacies of medium and message have not been happily resolved in postmodern works like *Nixon in China, The Death of Klinghoffer, The Ghosts of Versailles,* or Philip Glass' trilogy. In his view, for all their desire to be "critical, effectual and radical," opera composers personify "the lost political hopes of modern Western culture" (p. 207). Bokina's project is an unqualified success for having shown as much, critically and succinctly. In retrospect, however, is it too much to hope that the recent awakening to the *political* message of "transitional" works, like Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* (1904), might usher a recapitulation and a fresh aesthetic resolution?

Eleni Mahaira-Odoni

11. Stravinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
12. Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 338.

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*The End of Fascism in Perspective**

Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini l'Alleato*, Part II, *La Guerra Civile, 1943-1945* (Turin: Einaudi, 1997), 768 pp.+xii.

The first volume of Renzo De Felice's biography of Mussolini appeared in 1965. Now, after 30 years, the eighth and last volume finally appears, unfinished because of the author's death. The narrative stops in mid-1944, but the first four chapters, which had been completed with an appendix by De Felice himself and have been published by his friends and colaborators, Emilio Gentile, Giorgio Goglia and Mario Missori, constitute the first non-partisan history of the beginning of the resistence movement and the Social Republic, as well as the the first comprehensive study of the populations' attitude in a country devided between the Germans and the Anglo-Americans, and torn apart by civil war.

This volume thus marks the conclusion of an *opus* which over the years has become an indespensable reference not only for the Mussolini's life, but for fascism, of which De Felice is considered, both in Italy and abroad, the most important historian. Yet, every volume has generated polemics, even violent attacks (even his history of Italian Jews under fascism[1] generated a scandal), and the persistent accusation of wanting to rehabilitate Mussolini — so strong has been the refusal in Italy to come to terms with fascism and go from its demonization to a detached analysis. De Felice has systematically demolished the grand myths developed by Italian historiography during the post-WWII period, especially the myth of a broad opposition to the regime, which would have become evident with opposition to the racial laws and up to the adherence to the "people's war" of resistance. The thesis that the regime was not based on consensus but only passive acceptance still has important supporters, who seem to forget one of the most terrifying lessons to emerge from the study of 20th century history, i.e., the popular support for totalitarian regimes — a major theme in the current reconstruction of Nazism and Stalinism. The question concerning this consensus also comes up with the 1943-45 period concerning which there is still no widely accepted interpretation. In fact, there is an extensive literature concerning the Resistance which, however, deals very little with the Social Republic (the only useful reference here is F. W. Deakin's 1962 book on the subject[2]). At any rate, the various studies

* This is an edited version of a review which originally appeared in *Ideazione* (May-June 1997).

1. Renzo De Felice, *Storia degli Ebrei Italiani sotto il Fascismo* (Milan: Mondadori, 1977).

2. Frederick William Deakin, *Brutal Friendship. The Last Days of Mussolini* (Harmondnsworthy: Penguin, 1966).

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have been limited to interpreting this period as a political and military contraposition between fascism and anti-fascism. De Felice rejects this approach as too limited to grasp the population's "human condition" — a theme which is the focus of the book's central chapters. This is clear in the second chapter, dealing with the moral crisis after the September 8, 1943 collapse (when, according to De Felice, there was a loss of national identity). It is even more developed in the third, titled "The Drama of the Italian People — between Fascists and Partisans," which confronts the problem of the diversity of behaviors and motivations resulting in support for either side as well as their evolution over time, focusing on the population state of mind concerning the partisans' movement.

The central thesis of De Felice's last volume is that the Resistance, as well as support for the Social Republic, were the work of a minority. The claim that the majority of the population sought to remain out of it all, embroiled as little as possible, absorbed as it was in the struggle for survival, would seem almost obvious. If the active anti-fascists were a few thousands in 1943 (a figure accepted years ago even by comminist historians and confirmed by recent studies), vast participation in the Resistance was not possible and was not the case in any European countries, with the possible exception of Yugoslavia. Yet, in order to support this claim, De Felice has accumulated an extremely vast documentation, primarily anti-fascist sources such as the correspondence, memoirs and documents of the partisans' cadres. The picture that emerges is rather different from the traditional one. Considerable attention is devoted to the complex relation between the Resistance and the population — one initially of solidarity, but which in many places deteriorated following instances of violence and the forced requisition by the partisans, but most of all in the wake of the Germans' retaliations where and when civilians were blamed for the partisans' actions.

This volume contains so many new details concerning power relations within the Resistance that the narrative is very dense and difficult to follow. While the marginal role of soldiers in the organization of the first partisan groups has already been pointed out by other scholars, along with the spontaneous and a-political motivations of many of them, it has always been argued that the soldiers had for the most part "come back home." The prevailing view was of a Resistance dominated by members of the Action Party and the Garibaldi Brigades. On the basis of late 1944 data gathered by the SIM — the military information service reconstituted by the Badoglio government — it seems that even in that period the absolute majority of the formations were "a-political." De Felice documents the harshness of the communists' struggle for political hegemony, which often led them into conflict with the other groups.

De Felice's attempt to reinsert the history of these years in Italian history and to find in the dramatic events of that period the explanation for the Italians' subsequent political choices risks clashing with the lingering refusal to come to terms with Italian history, both of the 1943-45 period as well of the fascist era, which

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has blocked every attempt at historiographical renewal. Lack of consensus concerning the meaning of those events continues to divide historians and public opinion. It is increasingly necessary to inquire more deeply into the transition from the fascist regime to the party-system in order to understand the uncertain bases upon which Italian democracy was founded. This would make it possible to recapture a unified idea of Italian history by leaving behind the myths concerning the Resistance and the foundation of the First Republic. This can result only from acceptance of the past, which means also acceptance of complicity with fascism — a process similar to what has unfolded in Germany concerning Nazism and which is still taking place in France in relation to Vichy.

Elena Agarossi

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Cinéma engagé, cinéma enragé

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